Windows on History

The Record of

Tabernacle Baptist Church

Raleigh, North Carolina

1874–2000

"A Historic Church for the 21st Century"

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By Carolyn C. Robinson

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To members of Tabernacle Baptist Church—and more specifically to Jerry Cooper, Pat Warren, and Martha and John White, the history committee, who have worked so diligently with me—I express my deep appreciation for making this book possible. I am grateful as well to Phyllis Crane, who made the motion in church conference that such a record be published; to Dr. Mark White, encourager, who read the whole work—supposedly with a critical eye, but without criticism—before it went to press; and to Suzanne Britt, grammarian *extraordinaire.*

Also, my gratitude goes to church members who answered so readily my pleas for information: Willa Dean Hagler heads the list. She shared her nearly complete file of the *Tabernacle Record* and Sunday bulletins that covered the five years of missing conference minutes. Other contributors were John Hagler, Jesse Waugh, Earle and Mary Daeke, Gretchen Lloyd, Ruth King, Frances Cooke, Anne Baker, Lucille and Ray Smith, Jim O'Neal, Donna Eason, Phillip Stone, Mildred Wood, Nancy McLean, Dorothy Cooper, John Freeman, Bunny and Linwood Brown, Nell Liles Bailey, Carol Hollifield Beasley, Ray Kelly, and all the "spectators" who have gone before and now form that "Great Cloud of Witnesses."

My only regret is that Tabernacle's family is too large to mention each member by name; the constraint has been genuinely painful.

–CCR

PROLOGUE

Windows, like eyes, are structural openings for giving and receiving light. In the metaphorical sense, then, the windows of Tabernacle Baptist Church are its eyes, having *received* the light of secrets, mysteries, and ephiphanies for almost a century. The same windows have also *given* light, not only to the church for which they were made but also to a city in metamorphosis from a once-sleepy state capital, where education and government shaped Raleigh's identity, to a more recent bustling metropolis, where Tabernacle, technology, and traffic "cross the crowded ways of life."

The church treasures its windows. They are the Gospels in art—scenes in stained glass—including Christ's baptism by John; His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest; and His Ascension following several joyful post-Resurrection appearances.

On March 23, 1980, the Rev. T. Marshall Collins, the church's twentieth pastor, titled his final message at Tabernacle "Sermons in Stained Glass," and, while that message is not available two decades later, it remains a memorable one in the hearts and minds of many who heard it. In the meantime, church members Jerry B. Cooper and Clyde Smith have researched the scripture passage(s) which inspired each window and have matched text with art, dedicatory information with names and dates.

The cover of this book depicts *Christ and the Rich Young Ruler*, one of the more valued windows—valued first, perhaps, because its message resounds in every believer's struggle with materialism; second because of its artistic beauty. In fact, according to historians Jerry B. Cooper and Mary S. Kelley, this design is rumored to have won first place at one of the New York World's Fairs. On January 1, 1877, the Tabernacle Sunday school dedicated the window to Needham B. Broughton, Superintendent of that organization for thirty-seven years.

A certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.'" He replied, "I have kept all these since my youth." When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:18-25, NRSV)

The Baptism of Jesus. Dedication: Mary Broughton, Dec. 25, 1813– Jan. 8, 1892. Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:31–34.

And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(Mark 1:9-11, KJV)

The Good Shepherd
Dedication: John C. Jordan
January 1, 1837–April 23, 1898

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:11–15, KJV)

Jesus Knocking at the Door
Dedication: Caroline F. Lougee
February 19, 1895
Scripture: Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane
Scripture: Matthew 26:36–42; Mark 14:32–42;
Luke 22:39–46

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (Matt. 26:36–42, KJV)

The Ascension of Christ
Dr. and Mrs. A.M. Simms, Pastorate 1893–1900
Mr. and Mrs. R.N. Simms Deacon-Teachers 1900–1960
Scripture: Luke 24:50–51, Acts 1:9–11

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven: this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:9–11, KJV) ***Easter Lilies*** *(circular window): And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. (Matt. 6:27–29, NRSV)*

Since about 1911, when the windows—created by artisans of the VonGerichten Art Glass Company—were installed in the sanctuary building, worshipers have seen with their own eyes these messages of Light that are as old as the prophets' foretellings and as contemporary as the space travelers' awakenings.

Once the eye has seen, how does it reflect the Light it has received? The Gospels of both Matthew and Luke quote Jesus on the subject:

The *eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is [spiritually] healthy, your whole body will be full of light*" *(Matthew 6:22, 23; Luke 11:34). Jesus addressed his followers who had healthy eyes also in Matthew 5:14–16:* "*You are the light of the world. A city build on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light so shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14–16, NRSV

1

THE LIGHT ON SWAIN STREET
1874-1880

Which comes first—the church or the Sunday school? If the question had been put to the newest Baptist church in Raleigh in the late nineteenth century, the answer would have been, decidedly, the Sunday school. In its July 22, 1874, issue, the *Biblical Recorder* called to task a small Sunday school on Swain Street in Raleigh and its mother church:

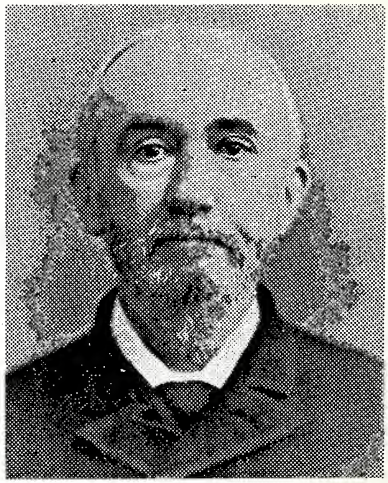
> The Second Baptist Sunday school . . . [established June 1] is now well supplied with chairs. The scholars and the congregation are constantly increasing. Brethren Allen and Broughton, with their zealous teachers, have abundant cause of thankfulness for such blessings upon their labours [sic]. Why not have a church here? Let the First Baptist Church appropriate something like $500 a year for a short time, for supporting a pastor to work up the congregation and we shall soon have a flourishing Second Church.

It is unclear whether or not "Brethren Allen and Broughton, with their zealous teachers," took a cue from the *Recorder*; nevertheless, in fewer than four months after the article appeared, "a floursishing Second Church" came into a southern city in which Federal troops would remain for three years more before pulling out to mark the end of the Reconstruction period after the Civil War.

The founding formalities occurred on Sunday afternoon, November 15, 1874, when ten members of First Baptist Church stepped out in faith to give life to its mission church: Jacob S. Allen and his wife, Martha Gorman Allen; Needham B. Broughton; William T. Womble; Henry Mitchell, Sr.; J. M. Broughton, Sr., and his sister, Mary; Carrie Wilson (Costner); Mattie Horton (Booker); and Cornelia Burch (Holleman) were active in the Swain Street Sunday school, which had been established by Raleigh's only white Baptist Church. A Presbytery, comprising Dr. T.H. Prichard, pastor of First Baptist Church; Dr. J.D.

Hufham, an editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, the Rev. A.F. Redd, also an editor of the *Recorder*; the Rev. J.L. Britt; and deacons of First Baptist Church "duly organized the foregoing brethren and sisters into the Swain Street Baptist Church, brethren J.S. Allen, N.B. Broughton, and W.T. Womble constituting the Board of Deacons" (Entry 1-1-1900). Needham Broughton was elected church clerk.

Also unclear is the name which the church officially adopted on the day of its founding. Most historical documents refer to "Second Baptist Church," while a number of others call it the "Swain Street Church." Several clues appear in various printed materials that would leave one to believe the names were interchangeable—perhaps with no legal bearing at all. For example, the minutes for the February, 1887, conference referred to First Baptist as "Salisbury Street Baptist Church." And in later records, when the church that is now Pullen Memorial was organized at the foot of Fayetteville Street, it was sometimes called "Third Baptist" and sometimes "Fayetteville Street Baptist." The churches, therefore, were less identifiable by a legally constituted name than by their locations and the order of their establishment.



Dr. J.D. Hufham

But of one name the new church was certain: that of J.D. Hufham. It had come up before, but in the first conference of Second Baptist/Swain Street Church, on Friday night, December 4, 1874, "the Committee appointed to confer with Bro. Hufham as to the pastorate of this Church reported that the brother had accepted the call [at a salary of $500 annually] and would enter upon the discharge of the duties by administering Communion on. . . the first Lord's Day in December"—only two days away. Records do not indicate the extent to which "Brethren Womble and Allen, who were . . . to procure necessary service for the Communion" had to scramble to borrow or to buy the common cup(s)

and the service plates, but history does record rapid growth of the church under Dr. Hufham's pastorate. In only three months, the crowds outgrew the building, and, "as if by magic," the meeting house was doubled in size, "and yet more room was needed" (1-1-1900).

Any historian would be hard pressed to say "Second Baptist Church" or, even later, "Tabernacle Baptist Church" without naming, in the same breath, Needham B. Broughton. In many ways, he was to the young church in Raleigh what Peter was to the early church in Jerusalem—always present, always making decisions, always leading, always speaking out for his Lord. Also like Peter, Broughton could sometimes have been considered a gadfly. For the length of his life, Broughton's name appears on almost every page of the church records, on almost every conference agenda, on almost every committee, and on almost every printed program for almost every special occasion. And he earned the profound respect of his peers in business and in civic life, as well as in church. He and his partner, Cornelius Bryant Edwards, owned the printing company that would become the largest publishing firm in North Carolina. According to *Raleigh City of Oaks* by James Vickers, "[t]heir business received a boost in 1873 when they formed a partnership with the publishers of the *Biblical Recorder*." One of Broughton's passions was education, as evidenced by the naming of the Needham Broughton High School which, seventy-four years later, still stands on the corner of Peace and St. Mary's Streets in Raleigh.

Broughton, Henry Mitchell, J.C. Birdsong, W.T. Womble, Thomas W. Blake, James M. Harris, and J.S. Allen were appointed the first trustees of the church, and Broughton was selected to represent the first delegation from the Second Church to attend the Raleigh Baptist Association. His Brother, J.M. Broughton, in the conference of September 24, 1875, had recommended that the church join the association, and the members readily agreed, but, perhaps in the excitement of doing things properly and in order, they forgot to apply for membership. Not until the conference of October 15 did they take care of that matter of business.

Very early, leaders of the recently constituted church set about making policies and voicing expectations, for example, letting it be known

that certain actions of their fellow members would not be tolerated. Chastisement for any form or degree of "unChristian conduct" was severe. While those who went astray would likely be granted a hearing before the church, they would also know that expulsion from the membership came readily and often. In fact, in the early years—and even the not-so-early years—much of every conference dealt with whom to vote out of the fold and who, also by vote, would be returned to it. Reasons for exclusion included drunkenness; heresy (involvement with another denomination); neglect of Christian duty; profanity; immoral conduct; *gross* immoral conduct; adultery; male members' absences from two—sometimes three—consecutive church conferences; failure to give evidence of change of heart; neglect of church worship; poor stewardship; and violation of covenant vows.

The church covenant was a top priority. To present such a document worthy of adoption meant time-consuming thought, frustrating starts and no finishes, at least for the three deacons, who were requested to assume responsibility for the covenant.

On July 16, "the Committee on Church Covenant and Rules asked for further time, which was granted."

On August 20, the church's "deferred business [was the] report of Committee on Church Covenant, they not being ready to report." They were granted a one-month extension.

On September 24, "the Committee on Church Covenant was granted further time."

On October 15, "Bro. Birdsong moved that the Committee on Church Covenant be discharged." The church voted "aye." He then moved that "Bro. W.T. Womble [one of the three deacons already responsible] be appointed a committee of one to prepare a Church Covenant.

"Bro. N.B. Broughton [also one of the three deacons] moved that Bro. Birdsong be added to the committee, which was adopted, and they were instructed to report at next regular meeting."

On November 19, "Bro. W.T. Womble, on part of Church Covenant Committee, read the Covenant of the First Baptist Church and recommended its adoption." Again, the church voted "aye."

Situations that cause some uneasiness in the church in the year 2000 were also bothersome in the 1870s. Location was at least partially to blame when, on August 20, 1875, the church voted to ask the Mayor "to bestow Police power on our Sexton, that he may . . . be enabled to preserve order in and around the church. . . ." One month later, the conference minutes read, "Bro. Z.T. Broughton asked to be relieved of his position as police in and around the Church. After some discussion, he was relieved."

Another admonition of the early days rings true in 2000: in the September conference of 1876, members were urged to welcome warmly new members and visitors. New members were phenomena of the 1800s, more so than in recent years. By the time Dr. Hufham's pastorate ended in mid-1877, 130 new members had been added to the rolls.

Regardless of the size of the church family, most churches in the past 125 years have fretted from time to time about finances. In the conference of May 21, 1875, "Bro. J.S. Allen made a verbal statement in regard to the indebtedness of the Church and urged the necessity of its speedy liquidation." But on August 20, Allen happily reported that "all indebtedness . . . had been liquidated." It took only a year for the debt to recur, however, and, on July 31, 1876, J.S. Allen requested a called conference for August 7 and urged all members to be present. L.O. Lougee reported for a committee which had been chosen to "wait on" delinquent members. In that era, the phrase "to wait on" was used in a sense of "to inquire of " or "to delve into" reasons for certain actions, and the deacons also frequently "waited on" members who had strayed onto questionable paths. An ominous-sounding note in the January 15, 1877, conference minutes cast a shadow of doubt over church unity: Bros. J.M. Broughton and N.B. Broughton were appointed a committee to "wait on" the pastor "in reference to baptizing new members."

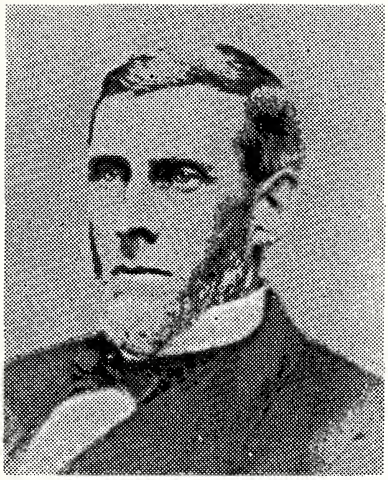
In the culture of the 21st Century, churches apparently experience less urgency in "waiting on" non-contributors or straying sheep than did those of the 19th Century, but many ministers of today would refute the fact that churches are loathe to "wait on" their pastors. All the early records of Tabernacle point to the fact that J.D. Hufham, first pastor,

was, at the time of his calling, an editor of the *Biblical Recorder*. But the masthead of the journal showed his editorship for the first time in the November 11 issue, published only five days before the founding of the church; therefore, a reader would have to assume that he was not a full-time pastor of Second Baptist Church. On November 25, the *Recorder* ran a personal message from Dr. Hufham: "It is pleasant to think that, in retiring from the Secretaryship of the Convention, I am not cut off from communication of dear friends . . . but that week by week we are to greet each other. . . . I am now permanently associated with Bro. Redd in the editorial management of the *Recorder*." A reader in the know might have pondered why he never mentioned his new pastorate.

At any rate, in the February 1877 conference, "the question of pastoral work . . . [elicited] considerable discussion." The following resolution was brought to the floor and adopted:

> RESOLVED I. That a committee of three be appointed to canvass the membership of the church for the purpose of finding out what additional contributions can be obtained toward an increase of our Pastor's salary, with a view to securing more of his time for pastoral work.

Dr. Hufham's letter of resignation came on July 2, 1877: "I have been moved with no dissatisfaction with the church or any of its members, for a better church I do not desire and could not have, but by matters purely Providential I desire that the resignation shall take effect next Sabbath." After accepting the resignation, the church took three actions: First, it drafted resolutions "expressive of our loss in [the pastor's] resignation"; second, it "fix[ed] the salary" of the next pastor at $600.00; and third, it prayed for "Divine help" before casting votes by secret ballot for a new pastor. A.C. Dixon received 30 of the 34 votes and was so notified; he declined, however, and another election ensued on August 6. The Rev. W.R. Gwaltney received a clear majority, and the deacons extended the invitation. This time, the elected one accepted his call, effective "the first Sabbath in October." He asked to begin his pastorate with a series of meetings, and of course, his wish was granted. Conference minutes for November 5 signaled completion of the process:



Dr. W.R. Gwaltney

"Letters of W.R. Gwaltney and Sister Amelia Gwaltney from WinstonBaptist Church [were] read and gladly received."

On the very day the church called Dr. Gwaltney, a committee began raising money to build a parsonage. On September 3, W.T. Womble reported for the committee that it had bought "a site of ground . . . being a portion of the lot now occupied by Sister Jane Ruth, for the sum of ($300) Three Hundred Dollars." Unfortunately, the records do not pinpoint the location of Sister Jane Ruth's property, but they do indicate that the parsonage eventually was completed and the finance committee charged with acquainting the membership "with the cost of the Pastor's Home."

In the fall months of 1877, the treasurer's reports were an enigma: On October 1, he said, "Our collections for last Sabbath was [sic] nearly $12.00, but heretofore were small." Then on November 5, "the collections were good, amounting to as much as $13 a Sabbath." To what extent these offerings met needs, one can't determine; however, in the first conference of 1878, "Bro. Womble stated that the coal purchased for the church had not been paid for," with which announcement he proceeded to pass the plate, finally announcing that "a sum sufficient had been raised." Also, in October, Dr. Gwaltney had indicated that he simply could not live on $600.00, whereupon the church immediately raised his salary to $800.00 annually.

In May, the church fired the finance committee, except for the chairman, "for falling short of their Christian duty, etc.," authorizing the chair to select six members who he thought would perform their duties, thus reducing the committee size by half. But in December, the church again voted the finance committee out of office and elected only four members to replace the six.

Problems notwithstanding, the infant Second Baptist Church knew

many "glory days" that were clouded by no financial squabbles at all. One early historian referred to a revival during Dr. Gwaltney's pastorate as "one of the most remarkable meetings" ever: During the meeting, the crowds were so large that it became necessary to move to Metropolitan Hall on Fayetteville Street between Hargett and Martin. "For forty years, it was the hub of Raleigh, serving as city hall, police station, town auditorium and Farmers Market" (Perkins, p. 93). Possibly, the people of Raleigh were as proud of Metropolitan Hall as of Briggs and Sons, Inc., a four-story building on Fayetteville Street, constructed the year the church was organized. At the time, Briggs Hardware was "the tallest building in eastern North Carolina" (p. 73).

During that revival, said the historian quoted above, "it soon became evident that a self-sustaining church would not be built up on Swain Street and the church determined to seek a more eligible site near the great body of the membership." In the conference of September 2, 1878, Needham B. Broughton cited the location of the church as inconvenient and moved that a committee be appointed to take into consideration the location of the church and see if a more suitable place can be secured . . . . The moderator immediately named Broughton to the committee, to serve with W.T. Womble and Henry Mitchell. In the wake of such significant action, attention turned again to the finance committee, which was directed to supply the deacons with the names of all members who were not carrying their weight financially.

Following the vote to relocate, the conference of October 7, 1878, took an interesting turn: "In regard to the moving of the church a discussion sprung [sic] up," after which Jacob S. Allen offered a resolution, which was adopted:

> RESOLVED that the clerk notify the members of this church of the action of this body tonight, and the motives that have actuated them in proposing to move the church to some other point and request the members to vote . . . and return [ballot] to the clerk.

A reader could sense a palpable eagerness as the members waited for the voting results at the next conference on November 4. The clerk announced the count: "For moving 47; against moving 43." One could

read into the minutes the silence that must have followed. Neither side could claim victory; a margin of four votes did not a majority make, and the level-headed Needham Broughton led the church to postpone the matter indefinitely.

Between the conferences of November and December, 1878, the word "indefinitely" took on new meaning. In a month's time, the membership revived the possibilities of relocation, and "[a]fter remarks from several brethren, the subject was fully discussed pending which Bro. W.T. Womble led in prayer, asking God to 'direct us in all our deliberations.'" A new vote was taken: for moving, 24; against moving, 4. Knowing that the site was already selected, J.W. Weathers moved that "the trustees . . . be instructed to secure the lot on the corner of Person and Hargett Streets, known as the Julia Peace lot for this church. . . ." Still another finance committee was elected and directed to solicit "subscriptions for the church [building] and take charge of same" (12-2-1878). So the church had given itself a Christmas gift; however, the New Year of 1879 would not be as kind to Second Baptist as its predecessor had been.

Although the capital city was growing, it still had not surpassed Wilmington, which was the largest city in the State. But Raleighites went about their lives, watching state government jobs exceed those of manufacturing; taking stock of the thriving hotel business; and observing new buildings, such as the Post Office on the corner of Fayetteville and Martin, rising downtown. Around 1875, Raleigh "[o]fficials . . . were struggling to pay off the city debt" (Vickers, 68), which may or may not have been indicative of a general economic slowdown. But a slow financial condition certainly existed at the church. And the summer heat—or thunderstorms—of 1879 did not help matters, for, in both June and August, the clerk recorded conference cancellations because of "inclement weather"; however, July—the month in between—made history: On the 13th, the church voted to "go into the erection of the new church as early as practicable."

Evidently, the financial discussions were continual: J.M. Broughton was instructed to place contribution boxes "on both sides of the church," and salary payments to Dr. Gwaltney were not consistent, the minutes

referring to the situation as the church's "arrearage." So clouds formed on the horizon: "Bro. S.O. Wilson moved that the Trustees be authorized to sell the Julia Peace lot for whatever will justify the sale in their judgment. . . .

"Bro. J.M. Broughton moved that Trustees be authorized to refund any money that has been paid for our said lot, which shall be called for.

"Bro. J.S. Allen moved that the Trustees be authorized to sell building material in their hands which they deem best."

Here might have entered "Aunt Samantha," a legendary member of Second Baptist on Swain Street. Dr. Forrest Feezor told the story—real or imagined—as it had been told to him: In 1879, when all work had come to a halt at the building site because of unpaid bills, "Aunt Samantha" trekked over to the corner of Person and Hargett Streets and found the rumors to be true: no sounds of hammers striking nails or of mortar slapping bricks nor of supervisors shouting orders or of masons singing their way to the top of a wall. Samantha fell to her knees, so the story goes, and cried out to God, pleading with Him for this new church, pointing out the needs of His people for it and the hopes and dreams of all it could mean to this neighborhood. Unknown to her, the contractor, who was finishing up some paper work inside his small shack, heard her cry for help, and soon the construction began again.

Somehow, the bills were paid. Examples of love, sacrifice, and determination became almost routine, as exemplified in a letter, which the church heard at its conference on December 29, 1879:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A number of Brethren and Sisters have held a fair during Christmas week from which we realized between six hundred and six hundred and fifty dollars, which amount we desire to turn over to the church to be used on the new church building.

Respectfully,

Mrs. J.S. Allen, President (Ladies Mission and Aid Society)

2

A MORE ELIGIBLE LOCATION
1881–1899

In *Our Heritage and Our Hope,* the history of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, author Roger H. Crook writes about Raleigh in the late 1800s:

> Like the rest of the South, Raleigh experienced great changes in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The streets were being paved, with work progressing on Fayetteville Street at the rate of about one block a year. Street lighting was being improved, and the system of horse-drawn street cars was being expanded. The first telephone exchange was opened in 1882. A more adequate water supply was provided, and fire protection became more of a reality.

By 1881, a new church stood on the corner of Person and Hargett Streets, waiting to be dedicated on "the first Sabbath in October" (9-2-1881). Here again, differing interpretations question the certainty of the name of the church at a particular point in its biography. Some historians cite this courageous move as the time for changing from "Swain Street" to "Second Baptist." In light of this historian's findings, as explained in Chapter 1, and of other discoveries, she interprets the renaming of the church to "Tabernacle" to coincide with its relocation across from Moore Square—then more commonly known as Baptist Grove. One of her "other discoveries" that lends credence to the old practice of identifying a church by its order of establishment or its location was in a resolution of respect for John D. Wynn, published

in 1884 in the *Biblical Recorder*, which cited Mr. Wynn's church (Tabernacle) as "Hargett Street Baptist Church."

At any rate, there was much to do: The Swain Street property must be disposed of, and the church advertised it for sale, having set the price at $1,500, requiring $500 cash, with the mortgage interest rate fixed at 8 percent. By the conference of September 2, the Swain Street building had two potential buyers: the "colored" Presbyterian Church . . . and the Raleigh Township School Committee. On September 30, the congregation learned that the School Committee had come up with the entire amount in cash and was, therefore, the new owner of the property.

Because the new building was occupied and the old one in good hands, one would assume that the weary might rest. But the records show no such inclination on the part of the membership. For example, on November 28, after the church was dedicated in October, the women organized the Woman's Mission Society. Mrs. J.M. Barbee, secretary, reported that the treasurer had received $3.00 from the four-member "collecting committee." She also related that a visiting committee was activated, "but little [had] been done on account of inclement weather." Mrs. Barbee then reverted to a language known well by Tabernacle Baptists when she explained that the monthly meeting time of the new society would be on *Monday before the first Sunday*.

In the conference soon after its first anniversary, the society reported by letter (by letter because only the men attended church conferences) that it had raised $72.23, $65.00 of which they had pledged to missions. In closing, the letter read, "Many destitute have been found and relieved so far as possible" (11-2-1882). The church expressed gratitude: "The thanks of the church are due and are hereby [expressed] to the Woman's Aid and Mission Society for the very valuable service rendered in behalf of many of the destitute and suffering children of our city who have by [the society's] untiring effort, been brought into the Sabbath school." The written report was "spread upon the minutes" of March 2, 1883.

And "spread upon the minutes" of March 3, 1882, is Jacob S. Allen's resolution regarding cornet music in church. Some members would have

construed it as serious, while others would have seen its irony; nevertheless, it was adopted:

> WHEREAS. There seems to be a difference of opinion in regard to the use of the Cornet Horn in the music of the church and Sunday school, and at least one of our members has quit the Sunday school on account of the use of the Cornet Horn, and as no vote has ever been taken in its introduction into the church and Sunday school, and some claim that a majority of the members of this church are opposed to its use in the church and Sunday school,
>
> RESOLVED. That the use of the Cornet Horn in the music of this church and Sunday school be approved. (Cooper and Kelley, 34)

In early 1883, this church "in the heart of Raleigh with Raleigh on its heart," as a former pastor was fond of saying, divided the city into regions for mission work and staffed each area with a male leader and his assistants—also male. For example, J.W. Denmark and his assistants were responsible for the northern part; W.M. Kerridge for the East; Lee Howard for the South; and W.R. Dicks for the West, including the Fair Grounds. Rev. Alvin Betts was assigned to the jail for two Sundays each month, and A.B. Broughton would make a monthly visit to the Alms House.

The missionary zeal was contagious. On June 29, N.B. Broughton reported that he, Messrs. Birdsong, Ferrell, and Wilson organized a "Sabbath School near Oaks" and that "the school was opened under very favorable auspices and bid fair to do a vast deal of good for the Master, and it would be considered a branch of this church."

Before the organization of the new "branch," the church evidently was renewed, refreshed, and revived during a protracted meeting in March. At the conference of March 2, George L. Tonnoffski, clerk, boasted of two new members; at special conferences on March 4, 19, 21, 25, and 29, he reported 28 additional newcomers—some for baptism; some by letter; and some by experience. Seventeen more would come into the church in April. It is obvious that the membership was truly renewed.

A sign that revival was still alive appeared in the conference minutes of May 4, when Dr. Gwaltney was worried because the water in the

baptismal pool was low and people were waiting to be baptized Sunday night. He did not know, he said, what to do about it. Immediately, "Bro. Melvin [sic] Broughton suggested that we endeavor to borrow a section of hose of Bro. Blake, chief of Fire department. . . . Bro. Blake being present stated that he would grant the request."

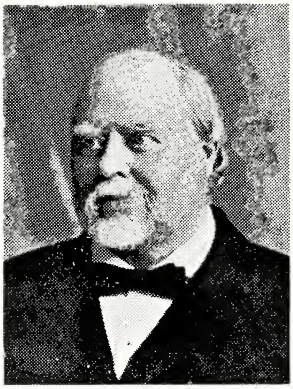
If the people who were the church believed that renewal was a daily exercise, many of them surrendered to some fairly strenuous workouts. All during the spring and summer of 1884, lay ministers reported on the health of their missions. After the Swain Street Station held its own revival, twenty-two persons had made "a profession of religion," nineteen of whom had joined Tabernacle Church.

Meanwhile, the church was heavily in debt, and, in the midst of money woes, it lost several members, who felt led to help organize Third Baptist Church. S.J. Betts was the first to speak out. The minutes of December 11, 1884, read, "[A]lthough he did it reluctantly because of his love for this church, yet feeling the leadership of God in the matter, he asked for a letter for himself and his wife to join in the organization of [the new church]." Sometimes called "Third Baptist," sometimes "Fayetteville Street Baptist," and, in the year 2000, "Pullen Memorial Baptist," the founding of the third church also claimed George L. Tonnoffski; Thomas W. Blake; and Julian B. Harrell and Mrs. Harrell.

On Sunday morning, November 2, 1884, after the sermon—and after seven years—Dr. Gwaltney tendered his resignation, and the church closed another chapter in its life at the "more eligible" location when, on January 2, 1885, it granted the letters of Dr. and Mrs. W.C. Gwaltney and their three daughters "to join at Greensboro."

As was customary, the church moved quickly to call another pastor. In December, following their acceptance of Dr. Gwantney's resignation, the members nominated Dr. W.A. Nelson. Of the 56 votes cast, he received 46, but the count was made unanimous, and, on January 1, 1885, Dr. Nelson appeared before the church to accept his call as third pastor. He was not long in his new pulpit before he preached a revival, in which fifty-three persons were added to the church. All during that

revival, the choir might have sung more heartily than usual because the church not only had appointed a new chorister—J.E. Ray—but also had provided new Baptist hymnals.


Dr. W.A. Nelson

The year of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, 1886, would likely be remembered by most Raleigh Baptists as the year of the revival led by the Rev. Thomas Dixon, Jr., at Tabernacle. A story told by the late Bessie Ivey Leonard, a long-time resident of Oakwood Avenue and a lifelong member of the church, takes the hearer back to Mr. Dixon's, with whom Mrs. Leonard's father had been greatly impressed. From all one can imagine, said Mrs. Leonard, Dixon was a fiery preacher—a pulpit-pounding, repentance focused, convincing one. After services on the evening of August 31, 1886, a group of church members gathered in the Iveys' Oakwood neighborhood to rehash the sermon they had just heard. At the same time, an earthquake struck Charleston, South Carolina, and was of such magnitude that, to some degree, the rumbles were heard and felt in Raleigh. Panic struck for a moment, Mrs. Leonard said; they were sure that the Lord was acting on Mr. Dixon's sermon.

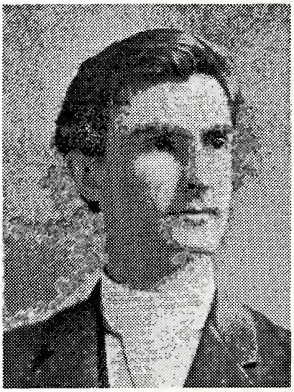
Only five days into 1887, the church learned that Dr. Nelson had been called to preach in Asheville, whereupon it adopted a resolution of love and respect, with the third part of the resolution reading as follows: "That we ask our Pastor to remain with us and we extend to our Sister Church at Asheville our sympathy and fraternal love and pray the blessings of our Heavenly Father upon them." But, alas, on Sunday, January 30, letters were granted to the Nelsons to "connect with" the church at Asheville.

On April 10, Tabernacle voted to call the Rev. Thomas Dixon, the winsome evangelist who had preached during the Charleston earthquake. He accepted and began his pastorate on the evening of May 1.

Whether or not a full-time pastor is present to console and advise,

life's shifting circumstances strike institutions and individuals alike. And occasionally, an unobtrusive bit of tragic information in conference minutes will mightily stir a reader's emotions. A handwritten entry dated Sunday, June 25, 1887, reads, "Died of Typhoid Fever, Saturday evening at 3:30 o'clock after an illness of two weeks. Sister Mary B. *Deaton*. S/ J.N. *Deaton*, Clerk." When one glimpses anew the miraculous advances in modern medicine, one must also realize the helplessness of the ill in earlier times.

On November 4, 1887, "Bro. Andrews," chairman of committee on the sick, reported having found a great many who were destitute of food and clothing, but the committee's collective hands were tied "on account of having no means." There followed the practice of a weekly collection at prayer meeting "to relieve the wants of the sick of our church." Interestingly enough, Jordan Womble, just the month before, had led the church to take a "collection for the Poor" after every communion service. In the year 2000, the membership refers to the continuing practice as "a benevolent offering."


Thomas Dixon, Jr.

Thomas Dixon, according to E.J. Perkins, staff writer for the *Raleigh Times* in 1979, was one of Tabernacle's "several famous and colorful pastors." That he had earned the highest grades ever accomplished at Wake Forest College leaves no doubt that he was a scholar. While in graduate school at Johns Hopkins, incidentally, he found that Woodrow Wilson was one of his classmates. Dixon's ambitions to become a lawyer or an actor were overshadowed by his call to the ministry, although he had read the law and had served in the North Carolina General Assembly in 1885. After the shortest pastorate in Tabernacle's history, he accepted another in Boston and, later, in New York. But he became a writer, best known for *The* Leopard's *Spots* and *The Clansman*, the latter having been made into a motion picture titled *Birth of a Nation*.

During Dixon's six-month pastorate, his sermons drew such large crowds that the church combined the Sunday school rooms and the auditorium to double the seating capacity to 1,200, which arrangement was far better than before—even if some of the worshipers could not see the pulpit.

And while the crowds were filling the sanctuary at Tabernacle, another phenomenon was occurring at the Southern Baptist Convention where, for the first time, a woman was recognized as a messenger from a local church.

But Tabernacle again found itself without a minister, and, unknown to the congregation, it had just witnessed the end of the second in a series of four short pastorates. In the conference of December 30, 1887, it unanimously voted to call to Dr. G.S. Williams of Nashville, Tennessee, who would remain fewer than two years. On January 8, 1888, Williams' letter of acceptance was read and ordered to be "spread upon the minutes" of the church, and had it not been "spread upon the minutes," the reader would not know that earlier Dr. Williams had visited Raleigh to see for himself what might lie before him.

Dr. G.S. Williams

There is no indication as to what Mr. Williams saw or heard, but one fact is clear: By this time, the church was well developed with committees and organizations. While it had, for some time, depended on the standing finance committee and ad hoc committees by the dozens, in 1888, it recorded several standing committees that had not previously been cited except by innuendo: Auditing; Committee on Ushering and Strangers, on New Members, on Tracts and Bibles, on the Poor and Sick, on Missions, and on Absentees. And the new Young Men's Missionary Union might have been the forerunner of the Brotherhood, or, later, Baptist Men. At any rate, the

young men's group grew rapidly, and, encouraged by their growth, they ordered a gospel tent for use in East Raleigh for Sunday School and Gospel Services.

Tabernacle's reputation for effective organization spread throughout the city. On May 5, the clerk read a letter from Third Baptist Church (Pullen Memorial) asking that N.B. Broughton, W.H. Holloway, and M.A. Parker be appointed a committee to help the infant church find a new home and supervise "their proposed new house."

Tabernacle was 14, still not quite at full maturity but, in many ways, wise for its age. The church decided to celebrate its birthday in November with a reunion service, which was successful to the point that it became an annual occurrence. Part of the agenda was to call the roll, which was a drama in itself when 180 people answered "present." And Tabernacle was very much present—and a presence—in its community:

> The church organized a free medical dispensary under the leadership of Dr. A.W. Goodwin. Free dispensary service and medical advice were given one hour each day and this humanitarian move contributed much to relieving the ills of the unfortunates of the community." (JBC, MSK, 6)

Records credit the church with great concern for the ill. But, in the August 31, 1888, conference, the chairman of the committee on the sick reported having difficulties finding "anyone to sit up with the sick and was sorry to say that the brethren generally refused to aid him on that line." R.H. Weathers had a ready comeback. All the chairman needed to do, he said, was to start calling all the men in the church in alphabetical order . . . . On October 5, Andrews' monthly report cited 94 such visits in September. Sitting up with the *spiritually* ill is also a challenge, but the church seemed to be doing well in that regard. On Sunday night, January 27, 1889, Dr. Williams baptized seven new Christians. The records carry his comments, though not verbatim:

> [The baptismal service] being about as long as an ordinary sermon, he did not wish to detain the congregation and therefore would ask that if the congregation would excuse him from preaching a sermon that he would excuse

them from hearing one and hoped that the sermon taught by the ordinance would be sufficient for them to think and meditate over, and asked that the congregation rise and receive the benediction.

Dr. Williams saw 80 new members come into the church in his short pastorate, and, in February 1899, the United States saw four new states—North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington— join the union. The church and the nation were growing. In addition to leading in outreach, Dr. Williams also led in income—in more ways than one. He campaigned vigorously for the church to pay off its debt of about $3,000, and his efforts were rewarded. Frugality might have prompted an entry of May 31, 1899: "Trustees were requested to look after Gas Meter as it was the opinion of several of the brethren that the Gas was either leaking or costing too much." According to the July 5 conference, June's gas bill had amounted to $6.25.

Very little information is available regarding the departure of Dr. Williams; however, according to a document by Dr. Feezor, Williams answered a call to Brooklyn, New York. The first the researcher "hears" of Williams' departure is the report at a special conference on Sunday morning, December 21, when the deacons recommended that the church call Dr. J.J. Hall of South Mills, North Carolina, and the recommendation was "heartily adopted by a unanimous vote." In the conference of January 3, 1890, Needham Broughton announced that "Bro. Hall" was in the city and would be with us the first Sunday in February. On Broughton's motion, the annual salary of the pastor was set at $1,500.00, and the church agreed to pay $50.00 toward his moving expenses. Dr. Hall found in Raleigh a "Baptist town," as Dr. Crook phrased it in his history of Pullen Church. Crook quoted historian Jamess Vickers: "In 1887, out of a total church membership of 3,590, the Baptists led with 2,005."

Large numbers of Baptists require large Baptist church houses, and large church houses require constant maintenance and refurbishing. Then serious, now humorous, entries in the October and December conference offer a glimpse into the difficulties: In October, the deacons

Dr. J. J. Hall

recommended that the electric light in front of the church be discontinued. In December, the church debated the propriety of "placing two stoves in the church room for the comfort of the congregation." It was apparently difficult not to become obsessive in the matter of suiting the building to the needs of a growing congregation, and the pastor appointed a building committee to be chaired by N.B. Broughton, who reported regularly—in April, 1891, to say they were "doing all they could do" to move the enlargement process along; in May to say they had to find a different architect because "Mr. Weatherly's plans were too costly." Less than two weeks later, the committee asked for a special meeting, pressing "the necessity of commencing work at once." A researcher would sense urgency in light of the fact that the trustees were instructed to borrow $3,000 so the church could "go forward with the work," and 14 men were added to the building committee.

An interesting possibility is buried in the history of the city. David Perkins wrote in the *News and Observer's Raleigh* a section titled "The Architect and the 'Princess.'" Raleigh's leading architect was Adolphus G. Bauer, and his wife, Rachel, was the princess. Because of Rachel's having been half Cherokee Indian, their romance and interracial marriage were the talk of the town for several years; however, appreciation of Bauer's architectural style ran a close second. He and Samuel Sloan had first come to Raleigh from Philadelphia to design the Governor's

Mansion—Sloan being the primary designer—which was occupied first by Governor Daniel G. Fowle in 1891. Fowle had called Bauer back to Raleigh to bid on some state contracts, and the architect picked up some private business, as well—including his masterpiece, the Baptist University for Women—a later name for Baptist Female University and an earlier name for Meredith College—on the block next to the Governor's Mansion downtown. When Meredith relocated to West Raleigh in 1926, that magnificent building became the Mansion Park Hotel, which was demolished in 1967. Perkins writes, "Bauer's buildings were examples of the florid Queen Anne style, much given to cupolas and turrets and bays, which expressed the exuberance and individualism of Raleigh in the Gilded Age." And the writer credits historian William B. Bushong with the information that "the Tabernacle Baptist Church on Moore Square" is one of the four remaining buildings designed by the famous architect (Perkins, 114–15). If Bauer did indeed design an enlarged church for Tabernacle, it would have been during Dr. Hall's pastorate.

During March and April of 1892, the church's reopening brought visiting preachers to preach; Governor Holt to speak; former pastors to deliver addresses; and a night of thanksgiving. A record book entry of January 1, 1900, describes the new building:

> The plans adopted made a complete revolution in the main audience room. The pulpit, formerly on the North end, was placed in an alcove on the East side—the old benches were taken out and opera chairs substituted, arranged in semi-circle rows. The entire floor was carpeted and a large vestibule added.
>
> The brick wall between the church and Sunday school rooms was taken out and rolling blinds were inserted, so that the two rooms can be thrown into one with comfortable seating capacity for 1,200 persons.

Tabernacle was delighted to contemplate all the good Baptists who would be filling the new building in December of 1892 at the annual session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The Convention's having accepted the church's invitation to meet there was uppermost in the minds of the people, who wanted to see every need

met. For example, in November, the trustees were directed "to have the chandalier [sic] in the audience room lowered . . . in order to improve the lights . . " and "to have built in the Sunday School yard a house of comfort" (11-4-1892).

And the December 8 minutes read, "The Baptist State Convention met in this church for its annual session and the Centennial Year of Foreign Missions, and continued in session until Monday evening at 11 p.m. when it adjourned. . . . The representation present is said to have been the largest in the history of the Baptist[s] of the State at their annual Convention."

Meanwhile, amid all the building, the meeting, and the celebrating, Tabernacle did not forget its mission. In January 1891, it had employed G.W. Partin "for all his time" as church collector and city missionary. And in November 1892, it hosted a revival, which resulted in the addition of 65 members.

Sixty-five new members in two weeks is a rather startling statistic, but perhaps every bit as impressive is 212 new members in three years. The latter are the numbers attributed to Dr. Hall's teaching and preaching and example. Hall resigned in May 1893, effective August 1: "I realize that I am severing a relationship that is sacred," he wrote, "and only the conviction that I am following Him whose I am and whom I serve could lead me thus to act" (5-21-1893). He moved from Raleigh to Norfolk, Virginia, and on July 26, the church wrote to him a heartfelt message: "As a faithful preacher of the Word you have given the highest satisfaction and the uniformly large audiences that have attended upon the same, and the active condition of our church at this time are the best evidences of the success attending your ministry."

Even before Dr. Hall's resignation had taken effect, the church voted unanimously on July 2, 1893, to call the Rev. A.M. Simms of McKinney, Texas. Mr. Simms accepted by letter dated July 13.

A new publication, which would live a long life, was first distributed to the membership in January 1894. In the early days, *Our*

Dr. A.M. Simms

Record was not only the title of a monthly newsletter but also of the Sunday bulletin.

Another tradition enjoyed at Tabernacle was the annual—and sometimes more frequent—protracted meetings. Dr. Len G. Broughton of Calvary Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia, had arrived on the 13th of March to preach a revival, and, despite the recent enlargement, the church found it necessary to bring in 89 folding chairs—and some generous soul(s) saw that the purchase was without cost to the church.

If a proposal to buy 89 chairs—at no cost to the church—was acceptable, maybe someone should have suggested the purchase of a pipe organ under the same conditions. The choir did just that on April 10, 1895, by announcing a "movement . . . to buy one at no debt to the church."

Subsequent records make no mention of the organ for a while, but they do announce prominently that the Degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon the pastor by the Board of Trustees of Wake Forest College at its commencement exercises in June 1895.

Pastor preached special sermon this morning. . . . Twenty-two years ago today this church was organized with ten members, during this time 1728 have joined us. Between 500 and 1000 conversions and eight gone out from among us to preach the Gospel, as ordained ministers. At close of sermon Pastor called on Deacon N.B. Broughton one of the original ten for some remarks. Bro. Broughton spoke very feelingly as to the history of the church calling special attention to the unanimity of the church in all our undertakens [sic] and how the church has stood together in all the strugles [sic] which we have passed through, and the great blessing which has been poured out upon us so abundantly as a church. (11-12-1896)

So the church grew to young adulthood. The ever-present Needham B. Broughton noted in the conference of March 4, 1897 that the time had come when the church should employ a full-time missionary whose

all-out efforts should be given to the work of the church. "And he thought that a lady who had taken a thorough course of training would be the proper person." On May 4, he proposed the name of Miss Maud Reid, who was or had been in training at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. She came highly recommended, he said, and the church voted unanimously in her favor—but for a trial period of six months. She arrived on May 29 and, as early as June, several in the congregation were very complimentary of her work. "Sister" Reid joined by letter from Lasalle Avenue Church in Chicago. Miss Reid was an advocate for women in the late 1800s. Tucked in among the attachments to an early minutes book is a written report from this missionary in 1898:

> The aggressive methods of work now taken up by our churches are creating a demand for skilful [sic] and effective workers, and for much of this service woman is naturally well fitted. One cannot be long in the Tabernacle without being struck with the number of young women in its gatherings. What a band of useful and effective workers they can make! It is impossible to measure the extent of their influence.

The extent of Miss Reid's influence was satisfying to her employer. The church had agreed on a six-month trial period when she was employed and, on March 3, 1898—ten months later—her review came to conference. The deacons had no hesitation in recommending that her work there continue, and, in almost the same breath, they set the third Sunday in March as Tabernacle Mission Day—apparently in Miss Reid's honor. It wasn't long until the deacons recommended on April 28 that Swain Street Mission be "tendered to the ladies for the purpose of holding women's meetings each Sunday afternoon."

But again focusing on the conference of March 3: Missions in action highlighted the meeting that evening, when seventeen members were granted letters to organize a church at Pilot Mills. Three days later, the new church was "duly constituted" with twenty-seven members.

In November 1898, a week-long revival in the duly constituted Tabernacle Baptist Church drew the good year to a close. Again, the visiting preacher was Dr. L.G. Broughton. An entry for Tuesday,

November 22, asserts that "tonight Rev. Mr. Broughton preached both morning and evening to the largest congregation ever gathered in our city!"

In a year's time, Tabernacle would celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, and Baptist Female University would open its doors to young women students. Mary Lynch Johnson wrote in *A History of Meredith College*, Second Edition, that "The Tabernacle Church, as part of the celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary on November 22, served 'lunch free of charge' to its members and friends from twelve to three o'clock, and to the faculty and young ladies of the Female University at five o'clock." Dr. Johnson also wrote of the college and the church as follows:

> That first year the pastors of both churches [Tabernacle and First] were trustees of the school, and they and their congregations made real church homes for the students. . . .
>
> That the influence of the churches was a vital one can be seen in a comment such as Margaret Ferguson Sackett made years later: "Though I was a Methodist, I always enjoyed going to Tabernacle Church, where I gained more inspiration and more old-fashioned religion that at any other church it has been my privilege to attend. I should willingly have walked miles to hear Miss Rosa Broughton and her father sing 'Dreams of Galilee.'"

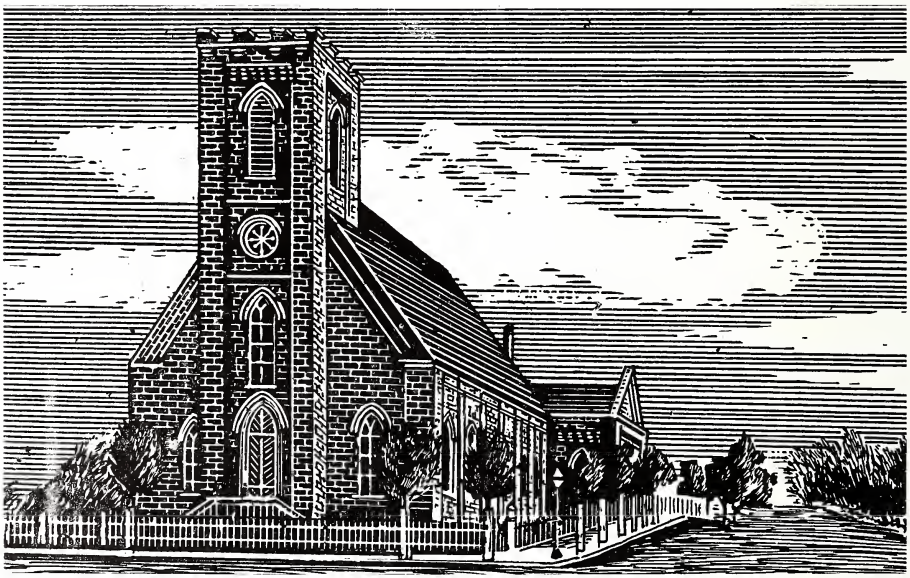
The week of Tabernacle's twenty-fifth anniversary was called a "Reunion," and it certainly merited the title, inasmuch as every former pastor, except Thomas Dixon, returned for his own night of participation. The pews were packed, as the story goes. On Sunday of the Reunion, 570 "scholars" were present in Sunday school, and 57 new members were enrolled. Reunion week was followed by a week-long revival.

Dr. Simms served as a messenger from the Church to the Baptist State Convention in December 1899, and, therefore, was absent when a Sunday morning guest preacher read a letter from Dr. Simms "tendering his resignation as our pastor, to take [effect] the last of January. This action on the part of Dr. Simms was a great surprise to the

church . . . ." It was also heartbreaking. The church had revealed something of its feeling for its seventh pastor on Dr. Simms' fiftieth birthday, June 20, 1897, in adopting a statement unanimously offering love, appreciation, and congratulations:

> We pray God that your useful life may be long spared and your health preserved that you may continue your Christlike administrations among us. In this our prayer we feel that the people of our entire community most heartily united, for no servant of Christ has ever been, and none has ever enjoyed more general confidence and love.

During Dr. Simms' pastorate, 504 persons were received into the church.

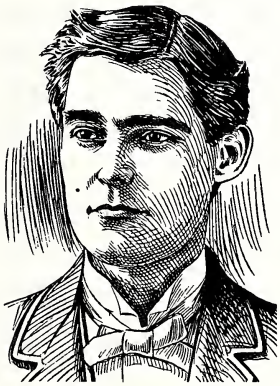


Artist's rendering of Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1890

3

A NEW CENTURY OF SERVICE
1900–1916

At the dawn of the 20th Century, President William McKinley was re-elected, having defeated William Jennings Bryan for the second time; Carrie Nation, with her band of women followers, smashed liquor barrels in Kansas City saloons; and the Olds Company gave Detroit its first automobile factory.



W.D. Hubbard

In Raleigh, Tabernacle Church, slowly recovering from the shock of losing its seventh pastor after seven very good years, called a new one. By invitation, the Rev. W.D. Hubbard came from Alabama to preach both morning and evening services on February 11, but it was March 4 before the church voted to call him. His reply was immediate but tentative. He was ill and "could not assume the responsibility as pastor" (3-14), but his health returned quickly, and he telegraphed his acceptance, expecting to begin his work on the first Sunday in April. In early May, however, he was still "remain[ing] a few days longer" at Jackson, Georgia (5-3-1900).

But Mr. Hubbard arrived at last, and the minutes of May 13 conveyed great pleasure in his "excellent [morning] sermon to a very large congregation."

Meanwhile, some of the everyday occurrences of the church were significant: In January, the Ladies Church Improvement Society saw to the replacing of windows in the church and the installing of "handsome new carpet on the floor." In May—a busy month—the church purchased a baptismal suit for the pastor; the deacons recommended that all members—male and female—be requested to attend conferences; and the church adopted a resolution expressing its desire to see the Bible and Baptist principles taught at Baptist Female University. In July, for the first time, a woman made a report in church conference: She was Maud Reid, the church missionary, whose reports had heretofore been presented by selected males. In February, the trustees bought a lot on East Davie Street and moved the Swain Street mission chapel to the new location; in March, the church instructed the trustees to buy a new pipe organ and see to its proper installation—at no expense to the church; and, in April, the Sunday school held a Rally Day. One can't discern from the minutes of April 15, 1900, which engendered more enthusiasm—the rally itself or the new pipe organ. "The trustees having our large and hansom [sic] Pipe Organ in place it was used on this occasion. A choir of young ladies and gentlemen from the Blind Institution [led] the singing, which was spiritually delightful."

Also spiritually delightful was a tribute the church paid the late Edward C. Holleman, a copy of which was published in the *Biblical Recorder* on November 28. It becomes part of this history—not so much for its tribute *per se*—Tabernacle issued many of those through the years—but because of what it said about God's servant:

> For a long time in addition to his work as Chairman of the Board of Deacons he served as Almoner of the church, and in this position requiring such delicate discretions, so much of sympathy and often so much attention, Bro. Holleman was unequalled; his ears were always open to the cry of the poor and by them his memory will live forever.

The year 1902 might have been viewed as comparatively average, except for an enrollment of 1,190 in Sunday school and an average attendance of 600. On Rally Day in September, however, 93 percent of

the members attended, and the school enrolled 118 new "scholars," as they were called in those days. April might have been considered a "red letter month" since, on the 6th, the church used individual communion cups for the first time in its history to serve 254 members at the service.

On the previous Friday night, although the weather was "unfavorable," a new mission at Bloodworth and Lenoir Streets, was dedicated.

August brought the return of evangelist Len G. Broughton from Atlanta to preach on Sunday night, the 31st. A notation in the record informs that "the need of more audience room was abundantly manifest by the tremendous throng." At the September conference, the committee on church improvements urged the enlargement of the west wing of the Sunday school room, believing that the work needed to be done at once.

Perhaps not a "tremendous throng," but a "large number" was present at an acquaintance meeting on October 16, 1902 , "and the evening was profitably spent, finally retiring to the home of the pastor, where a welcome and donation party was held, the pastor and family being liberally remembered by useful gifts." Nothing in the minutes indicates whether it was the pastor's birthday, or whether it was any kind of special date for him at all, but, to a reader almost a century away from the scene, the showering of Mr. Hubbard with gifts seems almost prophetic: In less than three months—on January 4, 1903—he tendered his resignation, having accepted a call to Shelby, North Carolina.

The long wait is over at last, wrote the clerk on June 5, 1903. "Our pastor and family, consisting of wife and four children, arrived this evening. They were warmly welcomed at the depot . . . , [and] Pastor Massee straightway won his way into all our hearts."

J.C. Massee of Mansfield, Ohio, had accepted the call in March, and he was not long in Raleigh before he was known for his stand against desecration of the Sabbath, having asked the church to pass a resolution to have no part in "that sin" of observing Sunday as a holiday or for profitable business purposes and to "deplore and protest violating the

purpose of God" in the fourth commandment. While Raleighites were informed—or misinformed—by a hostile press, Mr. Massee went about his ministry as he was led to do (one can almost picture an Old Testament prophet in the measure of Massee's determination and message).

Dr. J.C. Massee

On September 6, the church decided to appoint a committee "to prepare suitable resolutions in regard to the attack on our pastor by the press of the City." The resolution accused the media of misinterpreting the pastor and unjustly criticizing him in a way that were it to go unrefuted, it "would very seriously impair his usefulness as a Christian minister and do him great injustice." Apparently, Dr. Massee was unscathed by the criticism and never let go of his faithful zeal.

But Miss Maud Reid let go of some of her responsibilities at her resignation on October 7, 1903, after six years as church missionary. She would remain a member of the church; however, at the November conference, the deacons recommended that they find a man to replace Miss Reid, and, in December, the Rev. T.B. Davis of Bethel Hill was chosen, the church having bestowed upon him the title of Associate Pastor.

By this time, the membership stood at 666, and the property included the church and Sunday school buildings, two dwelling houses—one on Person Street and one on Hargett—for a total tax value of $50,000.

Some of the property was threatened with disaster when, on February 6, 1904, the church basement caught fire, but the nearby fire station—on the corner of Hargett and Blount—responded quickly, and, "in the providence of God the [church] was saved from burning and even from serious damage."

According to historians Jerry B. Cooper and Mary S. Kelley,

The pastor had been very much interested in getting the firemen who were not on duty to attend Sunday School and Church services but had not been too successful. One morning he entered the fire station and challenged the men to agree to attend Sunday School if he could climb the brass firemen's pole. Much to their amazement he climbed it and, of course they were in Sunday School next Sunday.

In the endless array of attachments to minutes, a photocopy of a post card commands attention: The card pictures a crowd of young men—at least 100—posing before what are obviously the arched windows of a church. The cutline reads, "Simms' Baraca Class, Tabernacle Sunday School, Raleigh, N.C.—'We do things.'" To one side is the Baraca national motto: "Young men at work for young men; all standing by the Bible and the Bible School." The Baraca class is alluded to frequently in the records—especially if one assumes that "B.B.B." in the B.B.B. Class stands for "*B*araca *B*oys' *B*rigade." On March 2, 1904, the burgeoning class, having outgrown its classrooms asked to rent the cottage "north of the church" in order to "fit up something of a 'club,' where young men may find a pleasant place open every evening." The church later revoked its request for $5.00 a month in rent, and, interestingly enough, it once secured a building on Wilmington Street for young men to use as a gymnasium.

Baracas made the news. In the monthly edition of *Our Record*, the class ran its own column titled "Baraca Notes," the columnist asserting, in May 1905, that Tabernacle's class "is regarded as the mother of the many Baraca Classes in North Carolina, now having a membership of about five thousand young men."

To think of Tabernacle's Sunday school in the early 1900s would be to think of Mr. Jo and Miss Ida Weathers, directors of the Primary Department, which was the epitome of children's departments everywhere. In *Our Record* for December, 1904, Miss Ida and Mr. Jo taught an average of 105 children each Sunday, out of an enrollment of 264. Untiring, the Weatherses also worked with the B.Y.P.U. The same monthly newletter read, "Our Baptist Young Peoples Union is one of perpetual activity and is an illustration of what you may expect when Bro. Jo Weathers and wife take hold of anything."

More accolades were accorded the Sunday school and the B.Y.P.U. as part of the pastor's first anniversary celebration: "The average attendance in the Sunday school is larger than heretofore, and the Young Peoples' Union has grown to be the best in the South" (*N&O*, June 4, 1904). Other reminders of the good first year under Dr. Massee included the addition of 160 members; the clearing of the church debt; an addition to the Sunday school rooms; an adjoining lot bought and paid for; and an increasingly large congregation.

Some of that increasingly large congregation would have been present at the church's annual meeting on December 11, 1904, when several items of historically significant business appeared on the agenda: For the first time, the minutes offered that a "thoroughly graded" Sunday school was in the offing; also, the deacons were looking toward changing their terms of office from life to a rotating system.

Possibly the most dramatic moments of the meeting occurred at the end with the roll call, beginning with the still-living charter members and followed by all the others in order of the dates on which they joined the church. And so Tabernacle Baptist Church ended its thirtieth year with 773 members; a Sunday school enrollment of 1,138, and contributions of $8,670.79.

Actually, the annual meeting did not end the year, for, in the January 1905 edition of *Our Record*, an item refers to *Santa Claus and Uncle Sam*, a cantata presented on an unspecified date at the Academy of Music—the city's main auditorium. "In some respects," boasted *Our Record*, the cantata "was the best we have ever given." Available information does not identify the singers or dramatists but expresses appreciation to the pianist and "our Sunday School Orchestra." Oral history passes on the theory that two of the featured actors were Esther T. Covington, a primary department child in 1904 and a member of the church at her death in 1994, and her father, William B. Tarkington, then a member of the choir.

On its banner in 1904–05, *Our Record* carried a slogan that readers of the newsletter would expect to see for many years: "A Greater and

More Perfect Tabernacle" (Heb. 9:11). And church members came to expect a thorough reporting of church events, as well. For instance, big news in the January 5, 1905, edition was the joint Week of Prayer organized by the women of both Tabernacle and of First Baptist. The paper also carried a "Personals" column, and, in the edition of March 1905, reported that Miss Carrie Broughton and Mrs. Douglas Watson had left for Washington to attend the second-term inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt.

Also in 1905, it was again time to accommodate more people in the church and Sunday school. After a Charlotte architect quoted prices that were out of reach, however, the building committee recommended only minor changes; i.e., moveable partitions; rolling blinds; reconfigurations of seats; a platform for the orchestra; and combination gas and electric light fixtures in the sanctuary and Sunday school rooms.

Just in time, the refurbished church house was ready for the Baptist State Convention, which again convened at Tabernacle, beginning December 6, and which, "by many . . . was considered the most largely attended convention that has been held for some years."

Interaction with its community—particularly Baptists—was typical of Tabernacle, but the church was not always willing to lend or rent its facilities to outsiders. One notable exception to that rule was its vote to allow Baptist University for Women to use the pipe organ five days a week, eight hours a day for a fee of 20¢ an hour. The university would ask the church to supply the man to pump the organ but not to furnish heat (9-10-05).

An example of Tabernacle's interaction with other religious institutions was the proposal "of various churches to unite" in bringing "Rev. Mr. Chadwick of Leeds, England," to Raleigh for a ten-day meeting. The efforts were rewarded sometime between February 28, 1906, when the church first learned of the plan, and May 29 of the same year, when it heard the results: In the span of two months, 129 new members joined the church—81 by experience and baptism; 30 by letter; five by watchcare (letters pending); four by relation; and nine by restoration.

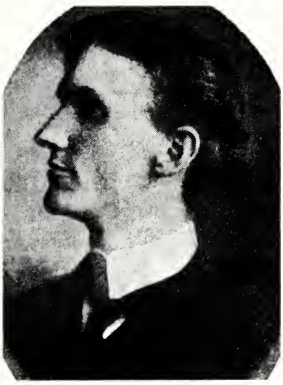
Even though Tabernacle requested and the General Assembly enacted legislation incorporating the church in 1907, the church neglected formally to accept the charter until 1909; however, knowledge of the legislation spurred on another move toward "A Greater and More Perfect Tabernacle." A new church was in the offing when, in the conference of February 5, 1907, Dr. Massee recommended that "we proceed to issue $35,000 in bonds to meet the expenses necessary in the erection of a new church." A building committee of ten would carry the load of decision-making and consequent action.The plan was, first, to buy "Mrs. Vivie Holleman's corner" and Mrs. E.L. Harris's property on New Bern Avenue and Person Street and there to erect a new building. When the building committee could not complete financial arrangements, the members insisted on another rebuilding and enlargement project at the present location and "that the matter be prosecuted as vigorously as possible" (10-2-1907). Eventually, they would sell the new property and apply the proceeds to the church debt.

In the meantime, the church granted Dr. Massee a leave of absence to attend the World Sunday School Convention in Rome.

Nineteen hundred and seven had been a good year: Tabernacle's membership of 1,200 and Sunday school enrollment of 1,540 were the largest in its history, as was the Foreign Missions Offering of $1,024.34.The church probably would have applauded its year-end report except on July 27, the deacons expressed "its sense that we have no applause either in church or Sunday school services except the waving of the handkerchief." But the next year, 1908, was "the worst of times, the best of times." In the worst of times, on Sunday morning, May 24, Dr. J.C. Massee resigned as pastor, effective July 1. The church clerk recorded the act as one that will be "long remembered by the congregation of the Raleigh Tabernacle Baptist Church," citing Massee as "the beloved and faithful pastor."

In the best of times, the church voted to furnish a room in the new infirmary of the Thomasville Orphanage in memory of Dr. Gwaltney, the second pastor, who had once chaired the Board of Trustees at the orphanage. And back home at Tabernacle, the trustees reported that the

supposed leak in the roof over the Sunday school room had been remedied by cleaning the gutters.



Dr. A.J. Moncrief

In the *very* best of times, the Rev. A.J. Moncrief of Forsyth, Georgia, had preached at both services on October 4, when he accepted a call from the church and began his pastorate on November 5. His home would be the refurbished and repaired Harris home on New Bern Avenue (see the previous page).

Soon after the arrival of Dr. Moncrief, the church once again busied itself with plans to rebuild and remodel; in September 1909, it voted to borrow $15,000 to begin the work and to pay off its then-current indebtedness. In conference on December 30, the church appointed A.J. Moncrief, J.H. Weathers, C.R. Boone, R.N. Simms, and W.A. Cooper to "arrange the allotment of windows for the new church building and placing of same. . . ." Despite the myriad and minute details of other projects, information on the magnificent windows is woefully lacking, the naming of the "allotment committee" comprising most of the available facts. The old chairs went for $1.00 each, and the once-prized organ was packed up in the tower room awaiting a buyer.

Windows opened to a glorious day in the life and times of Tabernacle to the extent that readers ninety years later sense the enthusiasm: The occasionof May 15, 1910, merited a six-column report in an unidentified and undated newspaper, which carried a list of contributors and pledgers, 38 of whom were not church members. The newspaper story, titled "$13,118.50 Raised at Tabernacle[:] Three Services in New Church Sunday," began, "Three elaborate services, each attended by some fifteen hundred people. . . ."

The congregation in the afternoon was a large and responsive one. . . . On the pulpit rostrum with the pastor, Rev. A.J. Moncrief, were ex-Governor R.B.

Glenn; Mayor J.S. Wynne; Mr. Josephus Daniels; Rev. W.C. Tyree (First Baptist); Rev. L.E.M. Freeman, pastor, Fayetteville Street Baptist Church; and Mr. John T. Pullen.

N.B. Broughton directed attention to "a great stand" near the pulpit, on which was "a large drawing of the . . . new church, this completely covered by small squares of white cardboard, 800 in all, each an index for $25.00, and that as pledges were made cards would be removed, and the outline of the church would be changed so as to show the front. He then called Mr. [W.A.] Cooper to the front to be ready to remove the cards. . . .

[Broughton] here stated that he desired to make the first contribution, not simply to be the first, but because he was one of the two remaining of the ten who began the church organization thirty-six years ago. He subscribed one thousand dollars, and 40 cards were removed from the board.

Then Mr. J.M. Broughton, the other of the two remaining of the band of ten, subscribed a thousand dollars, and forty more cards were removed.

And so it went. People, including former Governor Glenn, pledging until $13,118.00 had been subscribed and 524 of the cards removed. In the evening service, another $484.00 was contributed.

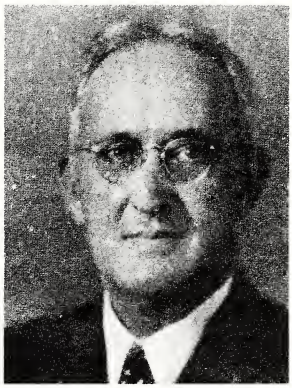
If the drawing of the church had included the interior, it would have called attention to the work of Louis Napoleon Riggan,"who carved the pedestals for the four busts in the Capitol Building" and also "carved and installed the baptistry of Tabernacle Baptist Church" (Johanna Seltz, *N&O*, 12-16-1977).

Following a period of settling down from—or on—a mountaintop, the church paid tribute to the Sunday school, which had, despite the hindrances of construction, remained faithful. On October 13, 1910, the main school claimed a membership of 1,156; the home department of 160; and the cradle roll of 140, for a total of 1,456. And, in compliance with the plan and schedule adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, the school would begin immediately to grade its pupils until a fully graded school was accomplished.

With the Sunday school's positive planning presented to the congregation in October, one would have no idea at all that, in September, another pastor had already resigned. A.J. Moncrief announced his resignation on Sepember 24, to be effective October 15. "Brother Weathers spoke in high terms of the work of Brother Moncrief

and referred to our magnificent church building which had been remodelled [sic] under his leadership, making reference also to the beautiful organ just installed; he said that no three years' work in our history had [meant] more to the church."

Dr. Charles E. Maddry from Statesville became Tabernacle's eleventh pastor on December 13, 1911. One of the first considerations of the church during his ministry had to do with the windows, as the church authorized the trustees to offer individuals, classes, or organizations the opportunity to use them as memorials, provided the donor(s) pay the price of the window and the trustees approve the person(s) so memorialized.



Dr. C.E. Maddry

The round window which the congregation faces and which the organ pipes frame is dedicated to the second superintendent of the Sunday school, who remained on the job for 37 years. *Our Record* of June 1914 begins, "Needham Bryant Broughton has passed beyond, and a church, a city, and a State mourn his loss." In the funeral service of ?? 1914, Pastor C.E. Maddry remembered Broughton as a man of vision; of faith; of courage; of righteousness, of loyalty, and of sympathetic tenderness. The *News and Observer* wrote of Broughton, "He was a man who put his trust in God, and it was from his knees that he arose to go out into life's contests." The newspaper mentioned the fact that Broughton had been a State Senator and that "His name and that of the Tabernacle Baptist Church go together." The *Raleigh Times* contributed, "The City and State lose much in the death of Needham Broughton. But the value of his life devoted to humanity is preserved in his deeds.

A tribute to Broughton from the church conference of June 17 read, "He gave more time to the Sunday School work than he did to his own business and caused his school and himself to be accorded a position in the fore-front of the Sunday school forces of the world." He was a

member of the executive committee of the International Sunday School Association, and, at Tabernacle, a deacon for forty years.

But despite its loss, the church moved on apace. And so did the newspapers' reporting of churches in general. In the midst of an apparent heat wave in June, the *News and Observer*, date unknown, subtitled an article, "Preachers Turn to Groves to Shepherd Their Flocks in Summer," and offered the news that, if the heat continued, "Mr. Maddry will direct his next Sunday night in the park across from the church"

In the cooler days of September, 1914, Miss Carrie Phillips organized a Y.W.A. (Young Woman's Auxiliary) of twenty-five members.

Organiziation, missions, and construction seemed to identify the ongoing needs and wishes of the church. On September 8, 1915, the subject of more construction arose: J. Melville Broughton, Jr., who succeeded his uncle as Sunday school superintendent, stated that plans were under way to build a new room for the Primary Department, which would be dedicated in honor of Mr. Jo and Miss Ida Weathers in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of their service to the church and its children.

And in honor of service of another kind, the conference body of August 3, 1915, elected church secretary Miss Flossie Correll to assume also the duties of treasurer, this at the resignation of T.C. Council. The minutes read, "In this, we may be breaking a precedent that the position heretofore has been held and filled by one of our male members but we see no reason why it should not be filled as successfully by Miss Correll as any member of our church." When Miss Correll resigned June 7, 1916, she was succeeded by Miss Mavis Smith as secretary and treasurer.

When Dr. Maddry resigned on May 6, 1916, he had already accepted a call to University Baptist Church of Austin, Texas.

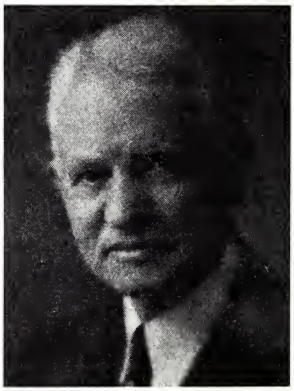
In his autobiography he wrote, "The four and one-half years at Tabernacle were fruitful in the service of Christ's gospel and at the same time were years filled with hard work and much travail of soul in trying

to be a faithful minister." Dr. Maddry would return to Raleigh in later years as general secretary of the Baptist State Convention.

4

MOUNTAINTOPS AND VALLEYS
1917–1930

Although Woodrow Wilson had been reelected President of the United States in 1916 on the slogan "He Kept Us Out of War," war seemed very close—and indeed it was just over the horizon—when, on January 10, 1917, Tabernacle called Dr. Weston Bruner as its twelfth pastor.



Dr. Weston Bruner

Under God's leadership, the church looked South to Atlanta to find Dr. Bruner, who was, at the time, serving a seven-year tenure as super-intendent of the department of evangelism of the Southern Baptist Convention. But probably what first attracted Tabernacle to him was his reputation as "one of the best known preachers of the country." He had been in his new pastorate only three months when Congress declared war on Germany and not quite a year when the nation added Austria-Hungary to its enemies' list. Small ad-like notices appeared in *Our Record*; i.e., "Some of our girls are knitting for the soldiers. Do you know how to knit? If not, come to the meeting next week and learn." "All ladies of the church who will volunteer to make a 'comfort bag' for our soldier boys . . . should communicate with Mrs. J.M. Edwards" (12-1917). Women of the church went to work coordinating the mailing of Christmas gifts to the 70-plus Tabernacle boys in the armed services.

Sunday school superintendent J.M. Broughton, Jr., communicated with the congregation in every issue of *Our Record*. In the February 1918 edition, he appealed to the membership to write "to our boys in the camps," adding, "We expect to have our service flag up by next Sunday. It will have seventy-five stars [one star for each young Tabernacle man in the service]. And sometimes the servicemen wrote to the church. Typical is the greeting in a letter signed by Lonnie Adams and Fred Poole, dated July 18, from "somewhere in France":

A long ways from the Baptist Grove
(How we long to be there!)

Church members volunteered for Red Cross duty; classes bought War Savings Stamps; and all seemed eager to welcome the Tank Camp, which was to be located in Raleigh. *Our Record* titled its story "The Tabernacle's Great Opportunity," and declared that "Many of us have been longing for a larger share in the War's burdens and responsibilities. . . . We do thank God for the share we already have through our one hundred boys in the service . . . and [through] the large number of our girls engaged in war work in Norfolk and Washington" (9-1918). Expecting 10,000 men to inhabit the camp, the church appointed a special camp committee; however, by December, the camp was closed, the Armistice having been signed on November 11.

In the midst of war came a revival—"thought by many to be the greatest revival ever held in the city," asserted *Our Record* for May 1918. Dr. L.R. Scarborough, a little-known evangelist, preached to "the largest congregations . . . ever assembled [here] for religious services. . . . "

By July, the summer heat and humidity were taking its toll on church-goers, whose only air conditioning was stirred by cardboard or palm-leaf fans. The Raleigh Ministers' Conference decided to hold union services on Sunday evenings in July and August. Dr. Bruner, who was to preach on July 7, said he would use his automobile as a pulpit stand. The formality of a lectern was unncessary, however, for congratulating Miss Carrie Broughton, long-time church member and descend-

ent of the Broughton wing of Tabernacle's founders, who had been named State Librarian, the first woman in North Carolina to hold a State office.

From pardonable pride, the church moved to despondency at the death of its former pastor, A.M. Simms. At the time of his death on August 2, 1918, he resided with the R.N. Simmses in Raleigh, who were members of the flock for so many years. Dr. Albert Simms' having returned for homecoming in 1999 attests to the family's abiding loyalty to Tabernacle.

The series of services which was to begin on September 29 was canceled because of the wildly spreading epidemic of Spanish influenza. As horrible and frightening as its duration must have been, the period was one of Tabernacle's finest "hours." The historical account is included in the records of both Dr. Forrest Feezor (1937) and Jerry B. Cooper and Mary S. Kelley (1974). The quotations came from an unidentified press report:

> An emergency kitchen to serve soup and a light diet for influenza patients who are needy or who are helpless by reason of incapacity of the entire family through sickness will be established at the Tabernacle Baptist Church today, October 18, 1918. . . . Miss Rosa Broughton is general chairman and Commissioner A.H. Mooneyham will undertake to deliver the soup to those who cannot send to the church for it. The ladies will be ready to begin serving at noon and will continue until 2 o'clock. There will be no lines drawn in the benevolent undertaking. No creed or race will be recognized but all who desire will be gladly served. . . .

A later edition reported,

> During the worst part of the influenza epidemic in this city, the emergency kitchen of the Tabernacle Church served 2,210 homes which was an average of about 85 daily. The kitchen was open for four weeks. . . . In expressing appreciation for the good work done in the kitchen, [Dr. Bruner said], "Besides serving over 2,000 people we also had the privilege of supplementing the supplies at the two hospitals daily during the entire time they were open. I wish to give expression of appreciation for the magnificent services rendered

by the noble women of our church who were assisted by the gracious aid of a large number of women from other churches in the city."

In December came the sad news that church leader Ernest R. Carroll had died, *Our Record* having touted the cause while mourning the loss: "It is not doubted that he contracted the illness which caused his death by his tireless ministrations to the sick of our city during the epidemic of influenza." Carroll was always associated with the Baraca movement; with the Y.M.C.A. during World War I; and with the Boy Scouts. In fact, it was he who organized the first troop of Scouts in Raleigh.

A.H. Mooneyham doubled his good deeds during the epidemic, not only co-supervising the soup kitchen but also taking the Sunday school lesson to the Meredith campus while the students were quarantined.

Aside from the fact that the pastor also contracted the 'flu, 1918 was simply a difficult year for Tabernacle. *Our Record* for January, 1919, counts the ways: thirty deaths in the church, including four deacons, a former pastor (Dr. Simms), "and . . . our Service Flag has three stars of gold." Also, twelve members left the church in their "desire to save the [financial] situation at Pullen Memorial . . . and to build up in the City another strong Baptist church."

Prohibition, strikes, race riots, President Woodrow Wilson's illness, organization of the American Communist Party, rejection of the League of Nations—all these national occurrences in 1919 must have overshadowed any good news, such as the creation of the Grand Canyon National Park. And the church debt also overshadowed the 75 Million Dollar Campaign launched by the Southern Baptist Convention. Object of the campaign was to increase support for "missionary, educational, and benevolent work" (RHC, 65). R.N. Simms, evidently a colonel in the campaign organization, wrote to his five majors: "In the great 75 Million Campaign there are two main divisions of the work, one being to raise money and the other to evangelize the people. In other words, it was money and men or finances and folks" (2-23-1920).

Tabernacle's convention-assigned apportionment was $15,000 per year, but because that was also the size of the church debt, the deacons

reestablished its goal, agreeing to contribute $12,000 annually to the campaign and pay down the church debt with the other $3,000. The agreed-upon amount was somehow lost in the translation, and the state's convention representative, former pastor C.E. Maddry, was forceful in his insistence on the original amount, but the church was just as adamant in holding to its smaller pledge. Ultimately, the national goal fell short by $17 million.

Meanwhile, a national "holy war" was fought between Christian liberals and fundamentalists—in the South, largely over the theory of evolution's being taught in the schools. Interestingly enough, Tabernacle's former pastor J.C. Massee—then a Bostonian—was one of three leaders in the World's Christian Fundamentals Association (RHC, 68). The debates were not as hostile in the south as in other parts of the nation. In fact, the Baptist State Convention, meeting at Tabernacle in 1919, apparently ran very smoothly indeed. M. Clay Warf, executive director of the North Carolina Baptist Foundation, wrote in the Summer 2000 issue of *Spreading Good News* that

> Foundation beginnings date back to the Baptist State Convention meeting in 1919 at Tabernacle Baptist Church, Raleigh, resulting in its being chartered as a charitable corporation on November 24, 1920. This action made the North Carolina Baptist Foundation the first such agency to be organized in Southern Baptist life in the nation.

At long last, the Roaring Twenties roared loudly enough to see ratification of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote. And, for the first time, the nation's population of 105 million–plus was more urban than rural. In July, 1921, the urban church known as Tabernacle mourned the death in Georgia of its sixth pastor, Dr. J.J. Hall, and sent a delegation to his funeral.

In March, 1922, a citywide revival in City Auditorium was conducted by Dr. George W. Truett, renowned pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, in the City Auditorium. How much impact the services had on the work of the W.M.U. will never be known, but the women reported 478 church visits; 50 hospital visits; 17 prison visits; 83

trays sent; and 60 pieces of clothing given.To climax a year of service, they organized a W.M.U. at *Leesville*. And they reorganized the Y.W.A. at their own church.

Organizing a way to attend to the church debt was not easy "during the period of terrible economic depression and ruin through which we have been passing," wrote R.N.Simms in his annual report as deacon chairman. But on a happier note, he added, "Brighter days are ahead, and I am sure the loyal people who have been faithful in . . . adversity will make fitting response to the favor of the Lord as he extends to them renewed prosperity" (12-11-1922).

The brighter days were postponed a bit with the January 15, 1923, resignation of Dr. Bruner, who had accepted a pastorate in Laurens, South Carolina. Under his ministry, the church gained 400 members; a $20,000 increase in contributions; and an average attendance of more than 1,000 in Sunday school. A newspaper clipping of unknown date and origin reported that the church had built a "handsome and substantial pastor's home" next door.

But light again shone through the windows on history. In May 1923, the church called Dr. Charles L. Greaves as its thirteenth pastor and named L.G. Bullard as the first full-time financial secretary. A newspaper again unidentified by name and date, announced, "On the arrival of the 'Carolina Special' Friday night, a hundred or more of the officers and members of the Tabernacle Baptist Church were awaiting their new pastor, Dr. Charles Greaves, who comes from Bowling Green, Kentucky . . . to become pastor of the largest congregation in the state." The first year of Dr. Greaves' ministry was a joy to his congregation. Not only was he a preacher "of rare charm and power," but also a pastor who had "the shepherd heart and loved the people" (JBC, MSK, 22). The deacons noted his ability to attract due attention from the newspapers, as gleaned from the minutes of December 4: "Regular notices to the newspapers concerning Sunday services were more or less intermittent until taken in hand by Dr. Greaves who has'nt [sic] slipped a cog." In only a year, 297 new members would come into the church, and—after

Dr. Charles L. Greaves

a Ham-Ramsay revival—the pastor would baptize 82 people in one service.

In the Greaves era, one of the first actions of the church was in answer to the Raleigh Baptist Council's purchase of property in Hayes-Barton on which to build a new church. Of the $7,000 total cost, Tabernacle was asked to assume $2,000; First Baptist $4,000; and Pullen Memorial, Southside, Johnson Memorial, and Pilot the remaining $1,000.

But the church was ready to spend at home a bit more than its assigned $2,000 at Hayes-Barton, the contract having already been let for a two-story building to house the cradle roll, beginner, and primary departments. One of the trustees involved in that undertaking would be the recently elected and the first woman to hold the office—the ubiquitous Miss Carrie Broughton.

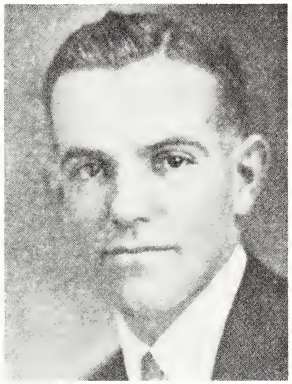
Tabernacle's faithful deacons were inspired in their final meeting of 1923 as the chairman challenged, "Let us run to meet the New Year and its work and then run with faithfulness the course set before us. . . . " He added,

> Raleigh is developing marvelously. Our section of the city is keeping pace with the growth seen everywhere. The splendid new Thompson School and the magnificent high school soon to be erected at our very doors mean wondrous things for all the section. Members are being added to our church almost daily, ... [and] there is entire unanimity and cordial fellowship in all our fold.

Tabernacle Baptist Church was 50 years old on November 15, 1924. To mark the anniversary, the church mounted a tablet in the sanctuary to the honor and in memory of its ten founders. As historians Cooper and Kelley wrote, "The occasion was used to challenge the members to a worthy emulation of those whose vision and sacrifice made possible this church" (p. 22). Dr. Greaves would have been three years old when the church was founded in 1874; he was only 55 when he died suddenly on November 2, 1927, leaving a church bereft at its loss. Mrs. Greaves

remained with the church and, for a while and at the church's invitation, continued to live in the parsonage without charge.

Memories of Tabernacle's visionaries would include many good years with their thirteenth pastor. Pastor No. 14 was Dr. E. Gibson Davis, who came from Mt. Airy, although he was a native of Pennsylvania and had been reared in Indiana. He was an alumnus of both Crozer and Southern Baptist Seminaries. Much in demand as a preacher, he also gave of his service in other areas, such as the General Board of the Baptist State Convention. His ministry at Tabernacle began on March 11, 1928, and his first column in *Our Record* warmed hearts and made friends:



Dr. E. Gibson Davis

I am not coming to you with the feeling of a Robinson Crusoe on a desert island. The shores have literally been covered with tracks. I am no pioneer exploer of an unbroken forest; the land has been cleared and cultivated. Others have labored and we enter into their labors. . . . Together with the conquering Christ, let us toil for the fulfillment of Christ's plans in our lives.

About the same time, church member Perry Morgan was named head of the "training activities" in the State and, through the years, particularly following this appointment, Tabernacle would welcome many members of the Convention staff into its fellowship. And missionaries on furlough would sometimes adopt the congregation as its church family, its church home. Mrs. Bunn Olive, for example, who had so influenced the W.M.S. as well as organized a Royal Ambassadors Chapter, would, in a few months, be leaving for China.

The church was eager to hear their new pastor broadcast his Sunday evening sermons, and the Committee on Radio negotiated with Radio Station WPTF "to secure an option," beginning in January, 1929, and continuing for three months, at a cost of $25.00 per Sunday. A yet-to-be-organized Radio Club would take care of time and money.

Committee on the Diaconate recommended an Auxiliary Board—later known as the "Junior Board"—based on I Timothy 3:10: "Let them also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." The idea was to elect 31 men to be students of church work, accepting specific responsibilities—Sunday evening offering collections and morning and evening welcoming duties—before being elected to the "Senior Board."

All the deacons probably participated in the Kernahan Personal Evangelist Campaign, a major topic of conversation in the November 30, 1930, church conference. But not until the annual report of December 8 does the reader know that Dr. Davis chaired the general committee for the campaign "and acquitted himself in a splendid way." The report also touted, "We received enough new members [147 to that date] to constitute a new church," and 125 Tabernacle workers had volunteered their services—"more than any other church in the City." At the end of 1930, the membership of the church stood at over 1,700.

To hear such positive thoughts and to see a proposed annual budget of $24,240.00, one would not associate them with the crushing difficulties of the Great Depression. Deacon chair R.N. Simms wrote,

> It has been the hardest year financially that probably any member of the Board can recall. Not only our section but our entire country, and indeed the world, has been passing through a period of great depression. It was hoped from time to time that improvement would come, but it has not yet materialized.
>
> Under these circumstances, we should feel very grateful and record our gratitude over the financial condition of the church and its work.

5

"A GREATER AND MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE" 1931–1945

Dr. Forrest C. Feezor

When Tabernacle called Forrest C. Feezor to be its fifteenth pastor, the Second Baptist Church of Liberty, Missouri, recorded its own sense of loss:

For five years he has labored among us, preaching the Word with boldness and courage, yet with tenderness and love. He has manifested a deep concern for the saving of the lost and for the development in Christian character, life and action, of the members of the church. He has been a faithful, considerate and warm hearted pastor, and has rendered an effective ministry to the College community as well as to the people of the town and of the country-side. (12-27-31)

According to Dr. Mark White, Tabernacle's twenty-third and current pastor, "When Dr. Feezor walked out on the platform that morning [January 1, 1932], it was the first time he had ever been in the church building, and most of the people in the congregation had never seen him before" (*Tabernacle Record*, 9-26-1999). On behalf of the pulpit committee, Joe Correll had called Dr. Feezor on the telephone, saying that a committee wanted unanimously to recommend Feezor to the church. The phone call was a complete surprise to the candidate, it being "customary for a prospective minister and a committee to negotiate at great length, have at least one meeting together, and sometimes to have a trial sermon so that the church members might see and hear the minister, " quoted Dr. White from *Spirit-Led Man of God*, Feezor's autobiography. Although it was "sight unseen" for both parties, God had seen, and when the church invited the city to welcome the new minister on January 17, such a crowd responded that it "taxed the capacity of the building."

Dr. Feezor hardly had time to catch his breath before the church suggested that he hold a revival, starting April 10—he to do the preaching, of course. Then Meredith College invited him to preach both the baccalaureate and missionary sermons the fifth Sunday in May, and the church gave him "the day off," delighted as it was to show off the new preacher. As he moved about the city, his reputation preceded him—and the volunteer job offers followed him, as in the case of his being appointed to the general board of the Baptist State Convention in 1933.

Other "new" staff people graced the church about this time, as well. Peyton Brown had been elected organist in December, 1931; and church secretary, Vera Ruth, was named educational director on December 20, 1933. And Tabernacle was naming not only staff members during those three years but also buildings: In December, 1932, the church had agreed to let the Sunday school use the old parsonage next door for $25.00 per month plus "all necessary repairs," and, inasmuch as it was officially given a name—the E.R. Carroll Building—in February, 1933, it must have been highly satisfactory as

the Sunday School Annex. On the heels of that popular initiative, the church named the new Sunday school building the "Weathers Elementary Building" in honor of the ever-loved Miss Ida and Mr. Jo.

On May 13, 1935, Miss Ida and Mr. Jo wrote to Phillip Stone, who, in 2000, chairs the church planning / building steering committee:

Dear Phillip,

You will never know just how glad we were to see you join the church and be baptized. . . . If you will *always* try to please Him in all you do and say you will be a happy little Christian. . . .

May God bless and keep you Phillip.

With love,

Mr. Jo and Miss Ida

In 1933, Phil Stone was promoted from the Primary to the Junior Department. His rather elegant certificate of promotion was signed by Mr. and Mrs. Jo H. Weathers, superintendents of the department; J.M. Broughton, superintendent of the Sunday school; and F.C. Feezor, minister. In his church treasures, Mr. Stone has kept a relic of his service in the Air Force—a *Wartime Prayer Guide*, gift of the Weatherses.

Churches have named and dedicated and memorialized buildings and organs and rooms since there have been "joint heirs with Christ"; however, Tabernacle took unprecedented action at prayer meeting on November 8, 1933, adopting a resolution that the State Mission Offering be designated for "the John T. Pullen Church" to help pay "the mortgage debt and interest." (Pullen Memorial on Fayetteville Street had been destroyed by fire in 1921 and had relocated to its present site on Hillsborough Street in 1923.)

It is tempting to conclude that the Vacation Bible School in the spring of 1934 was also precedent setting; however, there is no documentation to that effect. The fact is that Miss Ruth, the educational director, suggested holding one, and this is the first reference to V.B.S. in the church minutes (4-9-34).

Nell Liles Bailey, a Tabernacle member in 2000, does not say when she started attending V.B.S.; however, she writes, "I remember coming

to Vacation Bible School. We would get in line outside and sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" marching in. We would remember books of the Bible and lots of Bible verses which meant so much in life."

Untiring Christian service in song was the epithet assigned to the choir's loyalty and performance under the direction of Margaret and Peyton Brown in the mid-'30s. The music committee's report for 1934 read, in part, "During the year [the choir has] rendered twenty-seven new Anthems in addition to rendering 'The Crucifix' at Easter, and now they are prepared to render . . . their annual Christmas carols." In the same report is perhaps surprising information that Tabernacle, indeed, employed soloists: J.A. Luther, a paid tenor, received $15.00 per month, and Mrs. Brown, a soprano, earned $20.00. It is *not* surprising, however, that they returned their salaries to the church at the end of the year.

At year's end in 1932, deacon chair R.N. Simms spoke of "what has been in many ways the hardest year any of us have ever experienced [financially], " but, concluding his rather lengthy remarks, he said,"I am happy to say that I believe there has never been a period in the history of this church when the pure Gospel has been preached and taught with more power and success than during 1932."

The financial condition would soon improve as Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the office of President of the United States in 1933, again in 1937, and yet again in 1941. Elections at Tabernacle in 1933 included thirty-three young men who were chosen to serve as junior deacons, increasing the number on that board to fifty. The Senior Board ordained fourteen of its own. Both the Junior and Senior Boards would have spent some time in the early- to mid-'30s publicly doing their part to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and every other day to keep it acceptable. In July, 1932, the church expressed its unalterable opposition to Sunday baseball; in 1934, it condemned the "slot machine menace;" and it went on record as deploring the showing of motion pictures on Sunday. In 1935, it protested "legislative passage of any bill that would weaken the anti-liquor laws of the State."

The deacons joined the entire membership in a struggle over the uni-

fied budget concept, appointing a fifty-member Board of Finance, "representing all . . . departments and agencies of the church, said board to handle all . . . financial matters and to study the Unified Budget Plan for six months and report back to the church" (12-3-1935). At the same meeting, the conference named L.G. Bullard, who had served part-time, as full-time financial secretary.

Numbers, as they related to the Woman's Missionary Society, were impressive. At year's end in 1935, the W.M.S. supported fifteen circles; two Y.W.A.s; two G.A.s; two R.A.s, and a Sunbeam Band. The circles had organized by neighborhoods and named each group for a missionary, "thus binding each circle in a new and closer way to [that] missionary. . . ."

Baptist Training Union blossomed, too, its stalwarts participating in state and southwide competitions. For example, Edna Creel was Tabernacle's 1935 representative in the North Carolina Better Speakers' Contest at Ridgecrest, and Daphne Penney represented the church in the Southwide Sword Drill in Birmingham, Alabama. But travel to far-away places such as Ridgecrest and Birmingham was soon halted because of the nationwide epidemic of Infantile Paralysis.

No mention is made in official records what illness caused the death of Edward F. Lewis in July, 1935; however, the *Raleigh Times* noted his faithful attendance at Tabernacle's Sunday school for 35 consecutive years and reported that "His record . . . was said to have been given recognition over the civilized world."

When a very large church of 2,314 members celebrates its 62nd anniversary, it holds its reception across the street in the gymnasium of Hugh Morson High School, and when it serves meals and refreshments, it uses either the new kitchen in Carroll Hall or the old one under the sanctuary—or both. About twenty years after it was equipped in 1937, the Carroll Hall kitchen became the primary one. Effectiveness of all the kitchen facilities was tested at the 65th anniversary of the church in 1939, when the new building was dedicated.

Proof that the church had been serious about a building program in

1938 showed up under "items of disbursement" in the financial records, which included $270.00 for an architect and $77.40 for a draftsman. On March 9, the building committee had proposed to raise a three-story structure for the Junior, Intermediate, Primary, and Cradle Roll Departments, where the Carroll Building (former parsonage and Sunday school annex) then stood. The committee also had recommended the remodeling of the Weathers Building to reconfigure Sunday school classrooms, as well as the addition of two balconies in the sanctuary.

Somehow, new construction, has excited—and does excite—Tabernaclers. One senses historical significance in the minutes of April 25, 1939, at the laying of the the foundation of the new educational building:

> After prayer, . . . Dr. Forrest C. Feezor . . . laid the first brick upon the fresh mortar. The second brick was laid by the Superintendent of the Intermediate Department, Miss Lattie Rhodes. The third brick was laid by Mr. L.L. Morgan, State Secretary of the Sunday School work of North Carolina.
>
> This began the erection of . . . the first separate educational building in the history of the church.

As the buildings were being constructed and reconstructed, so was the music program. Margaret and Peyton Brown resigned from the choir to move out of state, and, in their stead, Gladys Lassiter and Gladys Ricks (Sutter) were named choir director and acting organist, respectively.

At that time in the life of the church, one of Tabernacle's own was in the spotlight: R.N. Simms had been elected president of the Baptist State Convention. The church itself was well-known in its own right—for many accomplishments, and, at that time, especially for ranking second in the state for its gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. During the Golden Jubilee Year, the fiftieth anniversary of the southwide W.M.U., the overall goal for 1937 was a 10 percent increase in gifts; Tabernacle's goal was 24 percent.

Increases in almost every area of church life were expected as the growth continued. For example, in May, 1940, James M. Wilder, who

had been ordained to the ministry by the church on June 10, 1937, began his assignment as assistant to the pastor, his duties to include oversight of educational work, editing the church bulletin, and whatever else the pastor requested.

On August 22, 1940, Stewart Simms, pastor of Calvary Church in Raleigh and a grandson of the late pastor, A.M. Simms, was ordained into the ministry at Tabernacle, and the uniqueness of his ordination was the preaching of Dr. George W. Truett, who, years before, had succeeded old Dr. Simms in his pastorate at the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. Relatively speaking, Dr. Truett was probably as well-received in that day as the Rev. Billy Graham was at a later time, and there again, the minutes read that Truett preached to "a vast throng that taxed the capacity of the church."

Since Jonathan Woods was ordained in 1891, many preachers had gone out from Tabernacle, and to name them would be to omit some inadvertently, but up to 1940, those for whom records exist include A.R. Love, 1896; E. Pope, 1907; Creecy C. Wheeler, 1909; B.F. Campbell, 1915; C.E. Ruffin, 1925; William W. Finlator, 1935; Albert Simms, 1938; and James Butler, 1937.

Governor J. Melville Broughton, superintendent of the Tabernacle Baptist Church Sunday school for 28 years, took office as Head of State on January 14, 1941. For the flowers that he found on his desk that first day, he wrote to the church, "Among all of the thoughtful and pleasant messages and tokens that came to me on this day, none was more appreciated than this which came from my own beloved church and Sunday School." After a four-year term as governor, Broughton won a seat in the United States Senate in 1948 but died in 1949.

Out of the Great Depression and into the Great War moved Tabernacle and every other church and individual in the nation. On December 7, 1941, members of the church heard a special report on the selection of a Sunday school superintendent, after which Joe S. Correll was nominated to the post. The next two entries in the record books

were for December 10 and 17, neither of which made mention of the December 7 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In the official records, the first mention of World War II appeared in the conference notes of May 6, 1942. It seems the church was in a quandary as to the membership of Kauza Murata, a young Japanese woman, who was a member of the church and a Meredith College graduate. Inasmuch as she had returned to Japan, the first inclination was simply to drop her from the roll; however, "since communication with that country has been difficult or impossible for several months . . . it was decided that no action should be taken, but rather that prayers should be offered in her behalf."

But positive action *was* taken, the church's having voted to use the Carroll Building for entertaining soldiers on weekends, providing cots for their comfort and Sunday morning breakfasts for their pleasure. The Service Men's Center remained open until 1946, its military guests numbering 2,000 in 1944 alone. History records warm hospitality by the church family, many members of whom entertained the soldiers in their homes. But, in spite of the war, life continued as normally as possible, the church having invited the Baptist State Convention to hold its 1942 meeting at Tabernacle during the weekend of October 23–25.

It must not have seemed at all normal, however, when Dr. Feezor read his letter of resignation to the church on January 6, 1943, after a warm people-pastor relationship of twelve years. He had been called, he said, to the Broadway Baptist Church of Ft. Worth, Texas. As the Cooper-Kelley historical team wrote, during Dr. Feezor's years, the budget increased from $26,000 to $39,730; the membership grew from 1,775 to 3,216; and the remarkable Sunday school attendance had required another building program. The Rev. L. Bunn Olive served as interim pastor for five months.

By unanimous vote, the church called Dr. Forrest Orion Mixon on May 30, 1943, and, in accepting, Dr. Mixon left the First Baptist Church of Tifton, Georgia, to begin his ministry in Raleigh on the first Sunday in July. The church would buy the Arrington Home at 809 North Person Street for the Mixons' residence.

Dr. F.O. Mixon

One of Dr. Mixon's first prayer services—on July 21, 1943—was palpably moving, apparently, being devoted to the servicemen and women from our church. "With Buddy Price calling the honor roll, loved ones and relatives of each one stood up to be recognized, stating their relationship to the person whose named was called, following which there was a season of prayer" for them all. A year later, the pastor would conduct a memorial service for five members of the church "who had made the supreme sacrifice for their country;" i.e., 2nd Lt. Richard Riddle; M/T Sgt. Robe Jones; Lt. Leon Caudle; PFC Alexander Fleming Vestal; and Staff Sgt. Charles N. Brooks (8-13-1944). In that era, the church appointed a committee of E.W. Yates; R.N. Simms; Joe Correll; and Della Carroll to advise returning service men and women as to the job market.

A very small war was being waged in the Baptist State Convention as to whether Meredith and Wake Forest Colleges should become one. Tabernacle took a stand, as it was wont to do, adopting the following resolution on November 8, 1944:

> Whereas, the Tabernacle Baptist Church is opposed to the proposed Merger [sic] of Meredith College and Wake Forest College; therefore be it resolved that our delegates to the Baptist State Convention at Charlotte be instructed to vote against this Merger.

Although there were 219 Tabernacle men in the Armed Forces in 1943, there were still 644 resident males left at home, and the church confidently added a Brotherhood to its program. By late 1946, the organization had enlisted 100 "active men" and elected L.L. Morgan as the first president. Meanwhile, younger males—members of Tabernacle's Boy Scout Troop 21—performed over 2,000 hours of civic and war duty, and, even though many of their leaders had been drafted, the assistant leaders prevailed, and the 63-member troop increased by 21.

On April 12, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died suddenly, and Vice President Harry S. Truman assumed that high office. Four months later, Truman would make a decision that would haunt the world even as it brought the peace: the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on August 6 and 9, respectively. The war ended August 14, 1945.

Neither war nor peace seemed to affect the weekly radio broadcasts of the downtown Protestant churches. In 1943, at the behest of WPTF radio, the churches took turns, by quarters, airing their Sunday morning services in this order: First Baptist; First Presbyterian; Church of the Good Shepherd, Episcopal; Tabernacle; Edenton Street Methodist; and Christ Church Episcopal. Both Governor Broughton and R.N. Simms had broadcast Sunday school lessons in the late '30s and early '40s, but several years of radio silence would follow before the ministry was resumed in 1986.

In another type of ministry, the church established a week-day school for pre-schoolers, with Elizabeth Dowell as supervisor. It started in the summer of 1945 with thirty children, and, by September, the enrollment had grown to fifty, with an average daily attendance of thirty-five. A profit was already showing: Receipts, $705.00; cost of operations, $638.60.

Even as little children flocked to pre-school, a grand exodus of mostly adults occurred when sixty-eight members requested their letters to join Forest Hills Baptist Church being organized in West Raleigh. All in all, 81 members left Tabernacle to help establish the new church.

Whatever else 1945 offered, it also required church staff reorganization. First, Mrs. Ford S. Burns resigned as educational director as of January 15, having held that job since September, 1943. The following week, the church voted to call a minister of education to perform a combination of administrative affairs and education. After still another week, L.G. Bullard resigned as financial secretary and assistant to the pastor, to be replaced by Beulah Sturdivant as financial secretary and *secretary* to the pastor. But Vera Ruth waited until May to resign as young people's leader and office secretary. The last change of

the period came in September, when the church employed Mrs. Charles Stephenson as educational director.

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the *greater and more perfect Tabernacle* that is not man-made. . . . (Hebrews 9:11, NIV)

6

THE POST-WAR GLORY DAYS
1946–1958

In the middle years of the Twentieth Century, global issues, such as the establishment of the United Nations, the rise of Communism, and what to do about atomic energy stalked around the edges of society; national concerns, such as Civil Rights, post-war inflation, and the Korean War pounded battle-weary individuals; local interests, such as whether to enlarge the Capitol or build a new one; Sunday Blue Laws; and Cameron Village, Raleigh's new and only shopping center, puffed up pride and nudged sensitivities.

Like most disasters, World War II had shaken people out of their complacency. Americans sought peace of mind after that battle over ideologies and territories and powers. They went back to church, and churches focused on creative ministries. For example, Tabernacle rented a cottage—and a cook—for those attending the Sunday School and Training Union Weeks at Ridgecrest in the summer of 1946. In 1947, fifty-eight members of the Training Union enjoyed a week at the mountain retreat, thirty of them singing in the assembly choir on Sunday.

Church membership stood at 3,250, when, in 1946, Tabernacle called its first full-time minister of music. More accurately, John D. Holmes was director of music and young people's work. His vita showed that he was from Farmville, North Carolina, and Ft. Worth, Texas.

Mention Mr. Holmes in the year 2000, and the people who remember him will recall the contrast in the height of the preacher (tall) and the musician (less tall) and in attire (the pastor dressed in a morning coat and the minister of music in a business suit). Mr. Holmes directed the choir from the rostrum below the choir loft. About the same time, the deacons and Dr. Mixon challenged the church to call a full-time minister for missionary service in the foreign field, details for which would be worked out with the Foreign Mission Board. The women independently had the same idea. Three months later, the W.M.U. also voted to support a missionary in 1947, "making two missionaries for our church, which increases the W.M.U. Special Offerings [goals] to $6,200.00, thereby making the total for missions $20,175.00" (10-23-1946).

Mae Reynolds, W.M.U. president, chastised the husbands who got first bids for the family cars:

> Occasionally we are told that non-attendance [at the monthly general meetings] is due to the fact that the husband has a church meeting or has to use the family car. . . . If the brethren won't join with us in our meetings at this time, we shall greatly appreciate it if they will keep W.M.S. nights in mind and send the [wives] with the cars to the meetings. (Report, 1-1947)

Two issues aroused debates in the heat of July: First, the church appointed eleven delegates (the minutes always report "delegates," not "messengers") to the special session of the Baptist State Convention in Greensboro to consider the Reynolds Foundation's offer to move Wake Forest College to Winston-Salem. No pre-determined position of the church is reported in the minutes, but those representing the church were not known for their reticence: W.D. Martin, L.L. Morgan, R.N. Simms, Sr., J.M. Broughton, G.W. Bullard, L.H. Baker, the Rev. Jesse McCarter, Joe S. Correll, Mae Reynolds, J.H. Bullard, and the Rev. Alphonso Jordan. Ironically, the outcome of the debated second issue is also not recorded; however, a strongly worded resolution made its way to the Alcohol Control Board, reading, in part, "We, the members of Tabernacle Baptist Church . . . strongly protest the location of a liquor store in the 600 block of North Person Street." Since its founding, the

church had opposed the sale of alcoholic beverages, and it couched this protest in the liquor store's being opened in a residential district.

Neither debate nor protest arose when the church decided that its pastor should attend the Baptist World Alliance at Copenhagen, Denmark, in July—all expenses paid—nor when Dr. Sankey Blanton agreed to serve as interim for Dr. Mixon's six-week absence. (Dr. Blanton is still remembered as long-time pastor of First Baptist in Wilmington and president of Crozer Theological Seminary.)

Protesting without rancor, the committee overseeing the nursery school and kindergarten "felt it not wise" to add the first grade to the school, as was recommended by the Raleigh Ministerial Association. In May, 1947, Virginia Phelps Sanner succeeded Elizabeth Dowell Kuhn as supervisor, and two new teachers—each holding teacher certification—were employed. Rather startling—at least for 1948— statistics came from a study of the school in March: Out of an en-rollment of 45 children, 36 were from families in which both the mother and the father worked; eight were children of single working mothers; and only one child had a stay-at-home mom.

The first personnel committee, constituted much like its successor in the year 2000, was established on October 8, 1947. The staff would, and still does, function under the "oversight and direction" of the pastor, and the committee wanted, and still wants, to be regarded as a friendly agency rather than a "dictatorial body" (12-31-47). Anne B. Ray had already been employed as financial secretary, replacing Beulah Sturdivant as of June 1, but the new committee was functioning in November and recommended Ethel Howard of Rock Hill, South Carolina, as director of religious education, and, in November, proposed the name of Joyce Wheeler as full-time hostess. Frances Greene would come as church secretary in 1949.

Anne Ray, the financial secretary, could not have known what Tabernacle had in store for her: first, she was expected to be at numer-

ous evening meetings—above and beyond her office hours—but, more important, David Baker, who, ostensibly concerned for her safety, would walk with her from those meetings to her home in the neighborhood. Soon, he escorted her *to* the meetings as well—and the Tabernacle romance is history. In 2000, Mrs. Anne Ray Baker smiles at the mention of her late husband but beams at the sight of her son, also named "David," who is a member of the church. Tabernacle was also the meeting place of Lucille and Ray Smith and of Dot and Jerry Cooper.

The church seemed eager to honor members and staff alike for their services. In June, 1948, for instance, a carillon would be placed in the bell tower to honor the memories of Mr. and Mrs. Jo H. Weathers and Dr. and Mrs. Charles L. Greaves, and a "suitable tablet" would be installed in the church. At a later date, Tabernacle decided to expand its memorial plaque to include names of other persons designated by donors who would contribute as much as $50.00. And, in the morning service of November 28, the church also honored its pastor:

> RESOLVED by the Tabernacle Baptist Church: That we express our appreciation of the great honor done our pastor in his election as President of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, which is generally regarded as the highest honor that can come to any Baptist in the State;
>
> RESOLVED FURTHER: That we express to our Pastor our congratulations and assure him that we will loyally support him in the discharge of the duties of his office. We realize that it will take some of his time and we shall expect to be generous in sharing him with the Baptists of our State. . . .

At the November conference earlier that week, members had learned that the Convention would again meet at Tabernacle in 1949.

March, 1949, came in like a lion. Tabernacle wanted to organize a new church "in North Raleigh" and so recommended the idea to the Raleigh Baptist Council. Not only did the church ask for the authorization to proceed, but it also went on record as pledging "full spiritual and financial support" to the proposed new church until it is able "to walk on its own feet" (3-20-1949). On May 29 at the Sunday

morning service, 57 members were granted letters to unite with Temple Baptist Church "in North Raleigh." In June, voters at a special conference pledged $5,000 from the building fund to Temple, and, in the first conference of 1951, on January 10, the church decided to take special offerings on two Sundays to help the recently organized Longview Baptist Church in the eastern part of the city. And Tabernacle lost 23 members to Longview.

This historian surmises that a bit of tension was being relieved for some at the resignations in August, 1950, of Ethel Howard, director of Christian education, and, on September 10, of John Holmes, minister of music, Mr. Holmes having given no notice at all. In the November 8 conference, R.N. Simms, Sr., called for a revival.

Dr. Mixon's letter of resignation, effective the day it was written, was dated July 29, 1951:

> [O]n the first day of July, 1943, according to His will I began work here as your pastor. These years have been mixed with joy and sadness; with hope and disappointment; with understanding and misunderstanding; with progress and failure; with light and darkness; with kindness and harshness; with health and illness. However, as we look back over them and remember only the good we rejoice in the wisdom of our Lord. . . .
>
> As He spoke eight years ago, He speaks again, calling me to the presidency of Chowan College, Murfreesboro, North Carolina . . . .

The resolution that followed made mention of "a division in the membership concerning his [Mixon's] pastorate" and a hope for "the favor of the Christian workers in the new field of labor to which he goes," upon which action letters were granted Dr. and Mrs. Mixon, Lynn, and Orion. In the conference of August 8, 1951, written resignations were accepted by the church from the church clerk; the church secretary; a senior deacon; and the co-director of the Training Union. At the same time, 29 letters were also granted.

On September 5, 1951, deacon chair J.H. Hutchins introduced Dr. John A. Ellis as interim pastor. Dr. Ellis, in turn, introduced Mrs. Ellis, and both presented themselves for membership.

Dr. Ellis would accept the call as full-time pastor in a special conference on Sunday morning, March 9, 1952. Although the Ellises had lived for a time in Sherman, Texas, they were not strangers to Raleigh, he having served as pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church from 1919–1929. One of his first official acts was to write, on behalf of the church, to President Harry S. Truman, opposing the proposed appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican:

Dr. John A. Ellis

> The principle of separation of church and state, as provided in the First Amendment to the Constitution, is one that we cherish and any infringe-ment on this principle, it seems to us, is dangerous in the extreme and should be avoided at all costs. This nomination, if confirmed by the Senate, would, in our opinion, . . . open the way for other violations in the years ahead. . . .
>
> It seems most unfortunate, Mr. President, that this divisive issue has been injected at this time when, for the sake of our own country and the welfare of the world, we need to be united as never before.

Cooper and Kelly wrote, "[Ellis] won the hearts and love of the members and served in a special way to bind up the wounds that had been incurred. His easy-going manner combined with the strong faith in God and Christian love for his fellow man did wonders to bring the church together." One of the humorous stories about Dr. Ellis was his ready response to hat connoisseur Mrs. Mary Jane Hornback, who, on a Sunday morning mentioned to the pastor that God had led her to buy the new hat she was wearing. Glancing upward, Dr. Ellis remarked, "I'm just not sure about the Lord's taste in hats."

Mrs. Hornback was once employed as summertime youth director. In January, 1952, the church called Melvin McClelland of Wake Forest College as choir director. In September, Mrs. Anne Baker resigned as financial secretary and Mrs. P.T. Rideout as part-time church secretary. Also in September, the Rev. Frank L. Perry, Jr., joined the staff as part-

time educational director; and, in December, as full-time minister of education. In October, Mrs. Anne McDonald accepted the job as financial secretary; and, in December, Mrs. Charles L. Watson became full-time director of visiting.

While motions regarding the work force were being approved, different kinds of votes were being cast for other areas of church life: For example, not "a recorded dissenting vote" opposed the adoption of the unified budget plan on October 19, 1952; another positive vote on December 3 allowed immediate construction of a cinder block hut for Boy Scouts "on the vacant lot behind the youth building on church property"; and, finally, the church decided to publish a weekly paper titled *Tabernacle Record,* to be edited by Frank Perry.

The *Record* would carry the news of what is believed to be the first Youth Week, set for April 5–12, 1953, with Jimmy Walker serving as pastor.

Eighty years old in 1954, Tabernacle claimed a membership of 2,185; a Sunday school enrollment of 1,684, with an average of 751 attending; and a Training Union enrollment of 362, with an average of 174 attending. The library catalogued 1,402 volumes. Rachel Smith was named records secretary and Carolyn Covington church secretary.

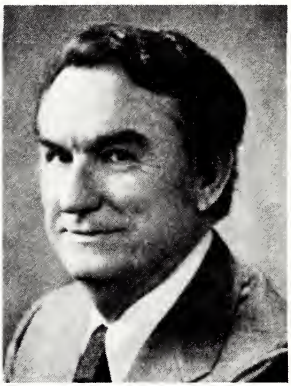
The *Tabernacle Record* was in the ninth number of its third volume of weekly publication when, under the column, "Pastor's Pen," Dr. Ellis encouraged the church in its thinking toward constructing a new education building. He reminded his readers that the church paid Hugh Morson High School $142.00 per month to rent classroom space. An August 14, 1955, headline for the *Record* read, "Ground Broken for Two-Story Educational Unit." W.D. Martin turned the first shovel of dirt, and Clancy Construction Company would build the structure.

On the front page of the *Record* of July 24, 1955, was a photograph of Adult I Department, the first standard department in the 80-year history of the church.

In a special conference on February 26, 1956, Dr. Ellis resigned, his pastorate to end "not later than July 15." Church-wide expressions of

concern would follow—not only in sorrow at his going but also in deep regret for his failing health. On April 11, Frank Perry resigned to accept a call from St. John's in Charlotte.

And, on June 3, 1956, Tabernacle voted to call the then-pastor of First Church, Statesville, James S. Potter, who was recommended to the pulpit committee "as the best preacher in the State." Mr. Potter and his wife, Evelyn, and their three children—Reid, Lynn, and Jon, an infant—would come in July. One of the conditions of Potter's acceptance was the freedom to honor an October commitment to a preaching mission in Alaska.



The Rev. James S. Potter

The team of Potter and Shoemaker was a force not only in the church but also in the city for the duration of their ministries at Tabernacle. The church had called Harold I. Shoemaker as director of music and education on Sunday, January 27, 1957, and the energetic young man, whose talents included a rich bass voice and "a way with people," seemed to fit well the time and place. He worked out in minute detail a Wednesday evening consolidated program, to include dinner in Carroll Dining Hall—50¢ for adults and 25¢ for children—children's missions organizations; committee meetings; and choirs. . . . To a degree, Mr. Shoemaker's Wednesday night schedule is still in effect, but, of course, the price of the meal has increased about sixfold.

To insure an excellent music program, Messrs. Potter and Shoemaker strongly recommended the remodeling of the choir loft, moving the organ away from the center and to one side—in fact replacing the pipe organ with a Baldwin electronic instrument. The pipe organ was donated to Campbell College.

A remodeling of the church staff also took place in 1957, with Barbara Herrin's becoming the pastor's secretary, Katherine Straughn the church secretary, and Mrs. Julian Hopkins, financial secretary, to be

succeeded by Mrs. Josephine Ussery in 1958. And another change occurred when the pastor announced the transfer of the Royal Ambassadors from the W.M.U. to the Brotherhood in an official service on Sunday morning, September 15.

A unanimous vote in the conference of November 14, 1956, indicated that all were in one accord regarding the church's decision to create a Department of Branch Sunday Schools, with Thomas G. Bashford as director, at which time the church authorized the establishment of Branch No. 1 for Southeast Raleigh. On September 11, 1957, another unanimous vote paved the way for Branch No. 2 on West Lenoir Street. A year later, on October 15, 1958, the two missions were officially "christened" as the Fellowship Mission and the James W. Fuller Mission, respectively.

James W. Fuller had died on September 5, 1957. To think of activity among members of the Tabernacle family was to think of him, a deacon, teacher, and leader, who was always on the go to minister where God led him. At his death, the church grieved, as borne out by a resolution declaring his death a "great loss . . . to the total welfare of our church": Be it resolved "that we give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the victorious life of James W. Fuller. His exemplary conduct as a Christian gentleman, father and husband, his love for the souls of men and his influence for good will be with us to inspire us and challenge us for years to come. . . ."

It was no surprise that Mr. Bashford recommended the church's assuming "full financial responsibility" for the Fuller Mission and that Tabernacle "extend the arm of fellowship to its missions, thus allowing them to accept members in the same manner by which church members are accepted at our regular . . . service[s]" (12-17-1958).

7

YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER
1959–1973

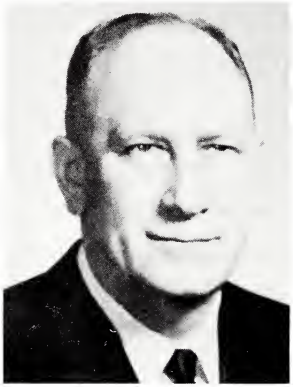
The writer of Hebrews said it so succinctly: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8, NRSV). But neighborhoods, governments, populations, idealogies, individuals, and societies change. And Tabernacle changes.

In 1954, the nation launched another civil war over the Supreme Court's decision outlawing segregation in the public schools. As a result, violence taxed sensibilities, and fear became commonplace. In 1961, black students staged a sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, the action having a significant impact on the Civil Rights movement. On the religious scene, Americans' post-war return to church waned, but "conservative evangelicalism," as Dr. Crook expressed it in his history of Pullen Memorial Church, gave rise to "para-church religious groups," such as the charismatic movement (Crook, 150).

The strange new culture raised questions of "what if . . . .?" for Tabernacle, but it was usually internal change that found its way into the record books—and, sometimes, into the local newspapers. For example, in a called conference on Sunday, April 26, 1959, Mr. Potter announced that he had accepted a call to Pritchard Memorial Church in Charlotte, his resignation to become effective June 7. *The News and Observer* reported the change the next day, comparing the two churches' sizes as 2,300 members each.

Rather quickly, the church asked Dr. Elmo Scoggin of Southeastern

Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Wake Forest to serve as interim pastor, beginning July 1. In the next few weeks, it voted to sell the parsonage and, rather than buy another, to apply proceeds of the sale to the air conditioning of those parts of the church not yet cooled.



Dr. James F. Heaton

But very soon—by September 13—John Simms, chair of the pulpit committee, was ready to recommend extending a call to Dr. James F. Heaton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, former chaplain in the United States Navy. Again, the *News and Observer* reported the next day: Heaton was native of Missouri; his A.B. degree and his honorary doctoral degree came from William Jewell College and his Th.M. from Southern Seminary. The newspaper mentioned his involvement in denominational affairs, including a reference to his current service on the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The new pastor heard a magnificent oratorio on February 28, 1960, when a 78-voice choir of youth and adults presented Mendelssohn's *Elijah,* under the direction of Mr. Shoemaker and the accompaniment of Mrs. Sutter at the organ. All members of the church, the soloists were Mrs. Donald Miller, soprano; Mrs. Jerome Council, alto; David S. Love, tenor; Harold I. Shoemaker, bass (Elijah); and Bobby Sutter, boy soprano.

Just as Dr.Heaton was beginning not to be "new" anymore, the past came rushing in with the death of Dr. John A. Ellis on July 4, 1960. The deacons submitted a resolution commemorating the extraordinary spiritual gifts of both Dr. and Mrs. Ellis and recommending that the chapel from that time be known as the "Ellis Memorial Chapel" in loving memory of them. A unanimous standing vote made it so.

Abstention from voting, on the other hand, raised heartfelt concerns for the James W. Fuller Mission. Tabernacle's proposed budget for 1961

had essentially eliminated support for the fledgling operation; therefore, the mission's entire nine-member staff abstained from voting on the budget. They were unwilling to vote for a budget that did not provide for the operation of a mission, and, at the same time, they did not wish to deprive the church of a unanimous vote of approval of its financial plan. Finally, at the same meeting of December 14, 1960, the church approved the budget as it had been presented, "with regret that any of the items had to be cut." A letter from the Fuller staff dated January 28, 1961, informed the church of their Spirit-led intention to continue the mission on their own.

Churches know about comings and goings. At Tabernacle in the '60s, the "comings" out-numbered the "goings" in most instances; however, the resignation of Hal Shoemaker, as of December 27, was major "going." But, on the other hand, Mrs. Frances Cooke came as financial secretary, signing the conference financial statement for the first time in April. And, in June, Robert W. Poole arrived to lead the ministry of music and fill the position of assistant to the pastor. Frances and Howard Cooke and their daughters, Marilyn and Anita, came from Longview Church in Raleigh; however, Mr. and Mrs. Poole and their sons, Bob and Bill, came all the way from Beaumont, Texas. According to the minutes of June 11, their arrival "was noted with joy, . . ." On the first day of the choir enlistment period in September, Mr. Poole noted an enrollment of more than 100 singers in the various choirs. Because of ill health, Mrs. Joyce Wheeler retired in 1964, after serving as church hostess for 16-plus years, and Mrs. Grace Brady came to that full-time job. Other arrivals were J.C. Price and his family, Mr. Price to begin his ministry in education on June 1, 1964.

Where finances are concerned, the "comings and goings" might need to be reconfigured. Many times in Tabernacle's budgets, the "goings" have outweighed the "comings," and, in 1961, $16,500 went for the purchase of the Mae Reynolds property just north of the church for use as a parking lot. In two years, the trustees negotiated for the Woodward property one lot farther down Person Street from the Reynolds place

possibly to convert it also for rental parking, using the rent collections to pay for the lot. It was not an easy decision: Should the church go into a profit-making business? In November, 1963, the finance committee had worked out a way to make monthly payments without renting parking spaces, but, on August 12, 1964, the church voted to have the house demolished and the lot cleared for parking, "or other designated use." The decision finally came down to parking, but not until the conference of December 15, 1965, when the church voted—28 for and 24 against—to rent assigned parking places for $7.00 per month for a six-month trial period.

In the meantime, the nation witnessed feats it never dreamed of, such as John Glenn's orbiting the earth in 1962. The space age was upon us: In 1965 at Tabernacle, John Simms led a prayer of thanksgiving "for the safe return of our four astronauts who rendezvoused in space for the first time this week" (12-15-1965). The decade's despicable assassinations were never dreamed of, either: President John F. Kennedy in 1963, Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

Downtown churches began to count the costs for the disappearance of neighborhoods; the rise of suburban churches; the encroachment of business; a mobile society; an aging population; the slacking off of formal worship; rescue missions here, homeless shelters there; and increase in criminal activities. The first recorded hint that such conditions might seriously affect Tabernacle was included in the minutes of June 15, 1966, when the deacon chair reported that a talk by church member Leon Shaw, "projected the church into the future and showed that we had opportunities before us and not just problems as a Downown Church." Sometimes the membership tended to let problems overshadow opportunities, particularly in light of such reports as one on February, 1967, showing payment of a bill "for repairs to safe door following robbery." Then, again, as Mr. Shaw had projected, downtown offered opportunities, such as that seized by Jan Price, who conducted a mission on summer Saturdays in 1966 for neighborhood

children, under the supervision of her father, minister of education J.C. Price. Jan was a young visionary with a bent toward happy thoughts and possibilities. Mr. and Mrs. Price left in late 1970 to answer a call to pioneer missions, and Tabernacle called the Rev. Theodore F. Coleman, Jr., to succeed him. But Mr. Coleman would remain for only a year, and, in the fall of 1972, the Rev. Edward C. Barron, Jr., a seminary student, would become part-time minister of education and youth.

Despite its seeming to be a stepping-stone for young staffers, the church remained strong and its family close-knit. At an October 5, 1969, reception in Carroll Hall, the church had celebrated Dr. Heaton's tenth anniversary, expressing appreciation for his "thoughtful and compassionate ministry," which had brought inspiring and scholarly sermons to his listeners. To a degree, his preaching ministry might have accounted for a number of Tabernacle members who were affiliated with the Baptist State Convention, although the church had seemed to attract them through the years. Sarah Ann Hobbs, State Y.W.A. director, was about to be honored at a reception on November 3 for her recent promotion to executive secretary of the North Carolina Woman's Missionary Union. Miss Hobbs represented the church at the Baptist World Alliance in Tokyo, Japan, in 1970.

Southeastern Seminary also afforded excellent guest preachers and, from time to time, several members. One of the latter was O.L. Cross, Southeastern's business manager, students' affection for him was easy to detect. To them, Mr. Cross was "Old Rugged."

Church life was many-faceted: In the sports arenas, Tabernacle men and boys often excelled. A softball team was active for many years, but the dates are uncertain, and two R.A. (Royal Ambassadors) basketball teams—particularly in the '70s—attracted great numbers of fans; in fact, the older team was the 1973 church league champion, receiving impressive awards both at a Camp Carraway retreat and a Tabernacle awards banquet. The Steadfast Class of the Sunday school had outfitted the team with uniforms.

"M" (Mobilization) Night for the Training Union created almost as

much excitement as a ball game for Tabernacle's Bennett Straughn, and, therefore, for the whole church. Mr. Straughn was associational T.U. director and was, therefore, "Mr. Training Union" all over the Raleigh Baptist Association, and his ongoing wish for the "M" Night rally at Memorial Auditorium was for Tabernacle to cop the attendance award once again, the church having taken the trophy in 1960. If "M" was for "Mobilization,""B" was for "the Best of Bennett." Whether Mr. Straughn was performing magic tricks or creating a serious chalk talk; whether he was chatting on his pocket phone to his imaginary friend, Narcissus, or leading the congregational singing in a Sunday night service; whether he was showing Balky, the two-youngster mule, or giving a testimony, the church could always count on Bennett at his best.

The Raleigh Baptist Association was blessed with Tabernacle leaders: In 1973, John Freeman was named Brotherhood director, joining Mr. Straughn as an officer in the association. In 2000, Dr. Mark White, pastor, would be elected moderator.

In February, 1972, the deacons had recommended that a long-range study committee look at location, programs, demographics, "and all things pertinent" to the church—the committee to comprise the pastor, other ministers, officers, organizational directors, and board and committee chairs. In April, four women were added: Bunny Brown, Willa Dean Hagler, Lorraine Simms, and Anne McDonald. As the long-range study committee increased its membership, the church reduced the number of junior deacons from 33 to 18 and changed the name of the smaller group to "Board of Associate Deacons."

Big news among the churches in 1971 had been the prospect of a Billy Graham Crusade in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Triangle in 1973, and right away, the church planned to participate "if in the providence of God it takes place" (6-23-71). The crusade did, indeed, take place, and Tabernacle chartered a 55-60-passenger bus to transport its members each night to Carter-Finley Stadium in West Raleigh.

In the decade 1963–1973, President Lyndon B. Johnson called for the "Great Society" while race riots raged in the cities, and the

Vietnam War (1965–1973) escalated, Americans divided in their adamant opposition to—or militant support of—the conflict. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon. Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment and submitted it to the states for ratification, the amendment eventually failing. Under a cloud of scandal, President Richard Nixon became the first president to resign from office. Inflation was also a problem to be reckoned with; however, Tabernacle's year-end financial report for 1973 included these words: "The financial record for the past twelve months . . . is perhaps the best in the history of the church."

It is no wonder that the church sees itself as on mission for God:

"Go ye into all the world . . . ."

And it is no wonder that the church sees itself as a safe haven:

"Come unto me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

8

"A BRIGHT FLAME BURNING"
1974

How does a church celebrate its one hundredth birthday? First, it gives thanks, and then it reflects on all its years. In *The First One Hundred Years of Tabernacle Baptist Church*, historians Jerry Cooper and Mary Kelley wrote,

> We come to our Centennial Celebration. A hundred years ago ten consecrated Christians *came running and builded them* a Tabernacle where they could fulfill the Great Commission in their own Jerusalem, Raleigh. This year, 1974, the Tabernacle Baptist Church commemorates the endeavors and mission of all those Christians who have gone before, spending a hundred years in the service of the Lord.

Mattie Horton Booker, one of the founders, was the last of the ten to survive. She was an ancestor of Anne Baker, who, in 2000, remains a church member.

The original Centennial Committee—Peyton Brown, chair; L.A. Brown, Sr.; Jerry Cooper; R. Leon Shaw; and John M. Simms—called for the services of many other committees and countless numbers of individuals to plan a *celebration extraordinaire*, beginning Wednesday, November 13 and continuing through Sunday, the 17th.

On opening night, the sanctuary was packed with church members and with, as one person said, "half of Raleigh, who used to belong to this church," to view the historial drama—*A Bright Flame Burning*—starring members of all ages. The drama title was the same as the theme for the week. Mrs. Jessica Feezor spoke to the Baptist Women on Thursday noon; and the graded choirs performed that evening, with Harold I. Shoemaker as guest soloist and speaker. Dr. James S. Potter, eighteenth pastor, spoke on Friday night; and, preceding a reception "for everybody," the youth presented a drama and folk musical on Saturday night. Sunday was a big day, featuring fourteenth pastor, Dr. E. Gibson Davis, at the 9:30 service and fifteenth pastor, Dr. Forrest C. Feezor, at 11:00. With a noontime basket lunch in the offing, Dr. Feezor probably uttered one of his famous one-liners: "I feel like a mummy— pressed for time"! After the early service, one of the loyal Tabernacle women approached Dr. Davis, took his hand, and exclaimed, "I'm sure you don't remember me!" Eyes twinkling, Dr. Davis instantly retorted, "My dear, I had to forget you so I could get on with my work." The Centennial celebration's final service at 2:00 p.m. allowed for reminiscences of church leaders in addition to the planned remarks by Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Mixon, and Mrs. Feezor.

For the church, year-end statistics in 1974 would have meant little more than numbers, unless, of course, one insisted on comparing the membership of 1,653 to the charter membership of ten in 1874, but then he/she would have also had to consider the significant difference between the then-current membership of 1,653 and that of 3,000-plus just two decades before. The conclusion might be drawn that the numbers reflected more on the culture than on the church.

Before the year was over, Dr. Heaton announced his retirement, and his last Sunday at Tabernacle was January 26, 1975. In the course of his pastorate, he had honored the denomination by his involvement in its activities, such as serving on the board of directors of the *Biblical Recorder,* as vice moderator of the Raleigh Baptist Association, and as a trustee of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. With her

husband, Elizabeth Heaton was faithful in visiting the flock, and, with his wife, Dr. Heaton was loyal in supporting the W.M.U.

James F. Heaton died September 3, 2000.

"The Ladies Aid and Mission Society," circa 1882, as portrayed in the 1974 Centennial drama. From left, Barbara Alley, Peggy Morris (Gooch), Willa Dean Hagler, and Dorothy Turner.

Director Ernie Robertson, left, and artist, stage manager Bennett Straughn for "A Bright Flame Burning."

9

A NEW DAY AT TABERNACLE
1975–1981

The thoughtfulness and wit that the Rev. Guy Cain brought to the church in 1975 was balm for a period of transition unlike Tabernacle had seen in sixteen years. The church had looked to its own membership for an interim pastor, who, before his retirement, had been a pastor and, most recently, secretary of the Annuity Board of North Carolina Baptists.

And if it is true that "good things come to those who wait," Tabernacle would have good years ahead. The church waited more than a year for its pastor search committee to nominate Dr. Heaton's successor, the Rev. T. Marshall Collins, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Dothan, Alabama. Almost immediately upon Rev. Stewart Simms' recommendation, and in the confidence of prayer, the committee felt led to Mr. Collins. The interim pastor had no knowledge of the sudden interest in the young man from Dothan; however, a Sunday or two later, when Mr. Cain's sermon topic was "The Prophet From Dothan," from II Kings 6:13 ff., the committee thought Providence was at work, as did Mr. Collins. He wrote on January 6, "My prayer is for God to lead us each step, 'for that shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.'" On March 6, he wrote to the church, "I have a vision of a NEW DAY . . . ," from which phrase evolved a slogan that spoke to the church throughout his pastorate: "There's a New Day at Tabernacle." Mr. Collins preached his first sermon as pastor on March 28, 1976. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, he graduated from

The Rev. T. Marshall Collins, right, 23rd pastor, ushered in "A New Day at Tabernacle." The ministerial staff in 1978–79 also included, from left, James Thurmond, ministerial intern for leadership training; Dennis Whitaker, ministerial intern for singles programs; the Rev. Robert W. Poole, associate pastor; and James C. Chitwood, minister of music and youth.

Howard College (now Samford University) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned the M.Div. and M.R.E. degrees. While he was at Tabernacle, Mr. Collins was elected to the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and was chaplain of the Raleigh Police Department. Mrs. Collins was talented musically and was well-grounded—and well-rounded—in other church ministries. She would take leadership roles in the North Carolina W.M.U. and would organize mission groups for young women at Tabernacle. She would also organize a musical group known as the "New Day Singers," who performed contemporary cantatas, such as *Alleluia.*

When the couple came to Raleigh, their son, Mark, was four years old; their Vietnamese foster daughter, Xuan Mai, was fifteen; and Laura Beth (now Lara) was born a few months later—she forever after to be known as "the Tabernacle baby." One of the ministries of the Collinses that so impressed the pastor search committee was their personal sponsorship of forty Vietnamese refugees. The fathers of both Mr. and Mrs. Collins were Baptist ministers.

The new day had already begun in June 1975, when Wachovia Bank notified the church of a trust established under the will of the late James Arden Jones, through whose bequest improvements in music equipment and programs would be financed in perpetuity. Mrs. Jones survived her husband and remained a member of the church until her death a few years later. In the meantime, Mrs. Theda Hodge had donated a set of handbells, and Mr. Poole had organized a choir of twelve ringers, who averaged 100 percent attendance.

Mr. Poole's music ministry was extraordinary. The adult choir was known as the best in town, not only for artistry but also for choices of music. From the classics to contemporary to Negro spirituals and to the comedic, such as *The Grasshopper Opera*, music of every appropriate variety and for every age was part of the church's education and enjoyment. In church conference of August 22, 1976, however, both Mr. Collins and Mr. Poole spoke of the Holy Spirit's leading toward their mutual decision that Robert Poole become full-time associate pastor, the aging church population already knowledgeable of his spiritual gifts in ministry to seniors.

Mr. Poole continued in the music ministry until July, 1977, when Sylvia B. Sutter, who had grown up in the church, became interim choir director, and it was June 14, 1978, before the church had in place its permanent minister of music and youth.

James C. Chitwood, a classic baritone; his wife, Pamela, also a singer—soprano—and their toddler, Ryan, met the congregation at a reception on June 25. Mr. Chitwood was a then-recent graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, with a master's degree in church music.

If Marshall Collins ushered in a New Day at Tabernacle, the year 1976 did the same for the nation, as America celebrated its Bicentennial. And the year also brought new recognition to Southern Baptists, when one of their own—James Earl (Jimmy) Carter of Plains, Georgia—was elected president of the United States. The nation's birthday observance included Tabernacle's hosting guided small-group historical tours for Wake County's Bicentennial Commission.

And the New Day at Tabernacle included Phyllis Crane's expertise in foods preparation and management, as she became church hostess for a brief time before accepting a job as staff secretary.

It would certainly be a new day if all the plans meshed for the anticipated major renovations to the church. A representative of Together We Build, the capital fund-raising arm of the Southern Baptist Convention's Stewardship Commission, and a convention architectural consultant came in November to recommend changes. The church issued bonds to finance the renovations.

Whatever changes 1976 ushered in, its last hurrah for Tabernacle was the announcement that, for his 25 years as Associational Director of Training Union ("growing, glowing, and going"), Bennett Straughn would be honored by the association at a banquet on September 27, 1977, and Mr. Straughn's ecstatic report that the church had won the cup for high attendance at "M" Night. Also, Tabernacle would host "M" Night on November 21, at which 88 churches would be represented.

Reporter Johanna Seltz wrote for the *News and Observer* an article titled, "City church pews emptier as suburban churches grow."

> They are big, stately, steeple-topped churches attended by influential citizens. They have the most eloquent pastors in town. Their reputation is that of quality, prestige and leadership.
>
> And they are losing members. . . .
>
> People are still moving to the suburbs and taking their church affiliation with them. Other reasons for the decline, [Dr. Robert L. Wilson of Duke Divinity School] said, are difficulties in parking and the disintegration of old neighborhoods.
>
> Consequently, many downtown churches are falling into a frightening

slump as their congregations grow older and less active and their buildings begin needing extensive repairs, Wilson said.

In Raleigh, membership at Tabernacle Baptist Church declined from 3,178 in 1950 to 1,546 in 1977.

Accompanying the story was a photograph of Marshall Collins with the massive church building in the background.

The staff declined by one on July 31, 1977, when James Walton retired as head custodian after 37 years. At evening worship on July 24, Oak City and Wake Baptist Grove Churches joined Tabernacle in honoring Mr. Walton, both at the service and at a reception that followed. James Walton's cousin Lonnie Walton, also a custodian, retired on May 31, 1978. Far from retirement, financial secretary Frances Cooke resigned in 1978 to become director of trust development for the North Carolina Baptist Foundation.

But there is a difference between "retirement" and "retiring," and twelve R.A. Crusaders were probably the least retiring basketball players ever assembled at Tabernacle. In 1978, the Crusaders, comprising boys in grades 3–6, knew the thrill of victory ten times and the agony of defeat not once in their conquest of the Raleigh R.A. Basketball tournament. The young champions were David Adams, David Beacham, Doug Casteen, Frank Fleming, Arthur Hagler, Brad Hanks, Chris Hanks, Doug Hudson, David Sadi, Lee Scott, Dale Smith, and Anthony Webb. Their coach was Harry Gentry.

Variety in worship emerges as a highlight in the records of 1978. Oak City Baptist Church, which had joined Tabernacle and Baptist Grove in honoring James Walton at his retirement, reciprocated on April 30, inviting the downtown congregation to the Method Road house of worship. Mr. Collins preached, and three of Tabernacle's choirs sang.

On Good Friday, March 24, the Better Homes Club invited the entire congregation to Carroll Hall for a Jewish Passover Feast. The Seder was considered to be authentic, and it was quite moving, according to many of the participants. Observance of the Lord's Supper climaxed the evening.

Christmas Seasons call for uniqueness, and one new and different facet of observance at Tabernacle in 1978 was the Madrigal Dinner on December 6. In the *Tabernacle Record* of November 24, Mr. Chitwood enticed the congregation: "There will be ceremonies and music from the tradition of the grand English Manor Hall of years gone by. [This is] . . . a chance to step back into Christmas past . . . and . . . to hear the music of Christmas sung as beautifully as anywhere in the world." The madrigals—Saralynn and Marshall Collins; Jim and Pam Chitwood; Becky and Bill Newberry; and Tommy Rose were dressed in full costume of the period, and the meal—including a whole roasted pig—was exquisitely presented.

Although Watchnight Services had been a long tradition, the 1978 New Year's Eve observance offered variety. The evening began at 7:00 with an hour-long worship program, followed by a covered dish supper. Planned recreation and fellowship filled the interim until nearly midnight, and the "watchers" entered the new year in prayer.

Landmark years for churches are quite common; however, 1979 produced some memories that remain as fresh as epiphanies for some but may be long forgotten by others. From the perspective of a few mainstream Baptists, Tabernacle took a major step when it ordained its first female deacon in January. Carolyn Robinson, elected in November, 1978, would serve as the only woman on the 39-member Diaconate for the year. Then in November, 1979, Peggy Morris (Gooch) would be elected, as would Dorothy Turner in 1980. These women, all of whom served together in 1981, were followed thereafter by many others—usually by more than one female per election. Mrs. Robinson would chair the deacon body in 1983, and Mildred Wood, Roberta Cyrus, and Willa Dean Hagler would hold the same high office in 1997, 1998, and 1999, respectively.

But 1979 was also a landmark year in that "The historic sanctuary . . . has been beautifully restored and renovated. The sweeping semicircle of steps makes pulpit and pew warmly and effectively close. The new lighting and paint and carpet help create an atmosphere of joyous light and quiet reflection. . . . To God be the glory" *(Record,* 7-27-

1979). In the same issue, Mr. Collins wrote, "*Oh, Glorious*! What a thrilling moment to stand behind the old Tabernacle pulpit and see such a large and joyous crowd of worshippers. [The refurbishing] stirred our hearts and imaginations as we [saw] the work and dreams of years come to be accomplished. . . . [I]sn't it just *beautiful*!" Elsie and Willis Lee were more than generous with their time and their gifts-in-kind during the renovations.

That edition of the *Record* also welcomed the Bird Family—Terry, Teresa, and their sons, Toby and Timothy. Mr. Bird was the new youth director.

While the New Year brought a mix of joy and sadness to the world—joy for the new peace between Israel and Egypt and sadness for Iran's capture of 52 American hostages—a sense of euphoria hovered over the corner of Person and Hargett Streets: Homecoming in 1979 would be like no event since the Centennial celebration five years earlier. E.J. Parkins wrote about "105 years of memories" for the *Raleigh Times* of September 29,

> There will be old-time singing and preaching and dinner on the grounds when members, former members and friends of the church . . . gather to honor the church's founding.
>
> About 1,200 persons are expected for the event, which starts with Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. and ends with evening worship at 5:00 p.m.
>
> [Covered dishes will be taken to Moore Square for a picnic.] The city is barricading one block of Hargett Street from noon until 5 p.m. so the street will be safe to cross.

Special guests would be Mayor Isabella Cannon; Dr. Cecil Ray, general secretary of the Baptist State Convention; and the Rev. Charles L. McMillan, director of missions for the Raleigh Baptist Association. Dr. Forrest Feezor would preach in the morning and Dr. James S. Potter in the evening. Other visiting former ministers would include Dr. James F. Heaton, Mr. Guy Cain, and Mr. Harold Shoemaker. Parkins continued, "A highlight of the observance will be the presentation by Thomas Broughton . . . of a Bible that once was used in the church's pulpit."

The happy spirit continued into the decade of the '80s as the church recognized Clyde Smith's appointment to the Board of Directors of the N.C. Baptist Foundation and John Freeman's selection as secretary of N.C. Baptist Men. Mr. Freeman would be named Baptist Man of the Year in 1996.

Gains and losses seemed to alternate. In January, Mr. Collins wrote in the *Tabernacle Record*, "With mixed emotions we rejoice with the decision of Jim and Pam Chitwood to return to Southern Seminary for doctoral studies" (1-25-1980).

In the *Record* of March 7, he wrote, "It is with deep and firm commitment to the revealed will of God for my life . . . that I do hereby tender my resignation as your pastor effective the thirty-first day of March, 1980, to accept the unanimous call as pastor of Green Street Baptist Church of High Point, North Carolina."

The Sunday bulletin for June 1 introduced interim pastor, Dr. John W. Tresch, Jr., associate professor of evangelism at Southeastern Seminary. Dr. Tresch had served as a Southern Baptist "missionary" at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, and freely shared with the church many of his fascinating and inspiring experiences in that role. Incidentally, he would be 1st John in a series of four successive ministers with the same given name.

Dr. Tresch preached in a revival series, beginning October 12, and after the morning service, "all are invited to a Barbecue dinner in the *newly renovated Carroll Hall*" (*Record*, 10-10-1980). Anne and Jerry Brooks chaired the steering committee through one of the best-organized and planned programs ever. In the Sunday bulletin for October 19, Dr. Tresch wrote, "Many thanks to all of the *722* people who helped on committees for preparation for the revival." No record exists as to how many of those committee members were seminary students, numbers of whom made Tabernacle their church home while Dr. Tresch was interim—and for some time after he left. His column in the *Record* for October 24 asked a crucial question that seminarians—and other Baptists—have asked from that time into the 21st Century: "Will the Southern Baptist Convention Survive?" The struggle through the years

has plumbed the depths of the problem(s), but the question is still relevant. Southeastern Seminary, where Tresch taught, was one of the first institutions altered by the new fundamentalism.

Fundamentally delightful were some of the creative ways of expression during this period. For example, Catherine Freeman organized an orchestra of recorders, which may be remembered as much for its name as for its music: "the Biblical Recorders."

Questions occasionally arose as to Tabernacle's choice of ministries; however, the effectiveness of the Linen Closet has not been questioned—at least not on record—since its start in 1979. Representing the Baptist Young Women, Roberta Cyrus called the Wake County Department of Social Services for ministry suggestions, and the Linen Closet was established. It remains open in the year 2000 to Social Services-referred people who need blankets, bedspreads, sheets, towels, curtains. When Peggy Gooch, the program's "head volunteer," learned of a local motel's closing in 1997, the Linen Closet fell heir to 80 blankets and bedspreads.

There was never a question as to the heartfelt regret in church secretary Katherine Straughn's retirement on December 31, 1980. For twenty-three years Mrs. Straughn, as in "Katherine and Bennett," had been minister, counselor, secretary, accordianist, witness. . . . She remained active in the church until her move to Florida, to be near her daughter, Kay, following Mr. Straughn's death. Sue Starnes moved into Mrs. Straughn's office in November, 1980, for training with the veteran secretary about the same time that Betsy Cornblatt assumed the position of financial secretary.

On February 15, youth director Terry Bird left Tabernacle, and Jeff Wisdom followed in that staff position.

Meanwhile, the pastor search committee announced plans for recommending John H. Hatcher as 21st pastor. He and his wife, Mary Ann, visited Raleigh on the weekend of April 24–26, giving the church opportunity to hear him in the pulpit as a prospective preacher and to greet the couple at a reception. The Georgia native graduated from the

University of Georgia and Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. His then-current pastorate was at the Capistrano Valley Church (Southern Baptist) of San Juan Capistrano, California

The standing vote took place on Sunday afternoon, the 26th.

The Rev. John H. Hatcher, left, celebrates a special occasion with Theda F. Hodge, Dr. John Carlton, Robert Poole, and Dr. Forrest Feezor.

Because of the crowd, the call appeared to be unanimous, none having stood to vote in opposition; however, later information revealed that a few members had abstained. Some in that category eventually left the church, and the mood did not seem to bode well for either pastor or people, although the pastor was highly regarded by many of the people.

Prior to the Hatchers' moving their residence from the west coast to the east, Dr. Tresch ended his eleventh month and his term as interim pastor, his last sermon having been delivered on May 10, 1981. In appreciation, the Better Homes Club hosted a love roast and the church a reception in his honor.

Again in May—on the 31st—the church held a public installation service for Mr. Hatcher, with official greetings from distinguished guests representing the State of North Carolina; the Baptist State Convention; the Raleigh Association; other Baptist churches; and, of course, Tabernacle. One of Mr. Hatcher's early privileges on behalf of the church was to present to Robert and Pearl Poole a twentieth anniversary gift in the form of an expense-paid trip to the Sixth Annual Baptist Study Conference at Oxford University in England.

On the same Sunday, June 7, 1981, the Memorial Pipe Organ, specially designed for Tabernacle, was played the first time for a worship service. The $71,300 organ was built by Moller, the world's largest pipe organ manufacturer. W. David Lynch, head of the music department at Meredith College and organist and choirmaster at Christ Church, Episcopal, would play a dedicatory recital on the new organ on July 19.

Good music was and probably always will be one of the joys of the church. Since early 1980, Catherine Freeman had served as interim minister of music and was given due credit in a Tabernacle Record article of June 24, 1981:

> Tabernacle is among the top 25 churches of the entire Southern Bapist Convention regarding the number of Church Music Awards. Our church was called out during the meetings [of the 1981 Convention] for the fine work it has done this past year. We are most grateful to Catherine Freeman and the work she is doing with our choirs. Catherine is a talented musician who gives her talents to glorify God through Tabernacle.

Mrs. Freeman resigned as of July 26 but by August was again directing the youth choir as Sherry Henderson accompanied it for evening services. Autry Lewis agreed to direct the adult choir "for several weeks."

As with every pastor, Mr. Hatcher introduced some new "traditions" and probably let some old ones go. He wrote in the *Tabernacle Record* of June 11, "Tabernacle Baptist Church is a very impressive church in many different ways. . . . It was impressive last Sunday when more than twenty-five men and women joined me in the Pastor's Study for prayer prior to the morning service [and] . . . that prayer meeting will take

place every Sunday morning at 10:45." Another tradition—short-lived as it was—included a parade of flags of all fifty states, and twenty additional banners that had served the nation, in celebration of America's Independence Day. Both 1981 and 1982 parades were parts of the morning service of the Sunday nearest July 4 in both years. In October, 1981, Mr. Hatcher and Carolyn Robinson collaborated to create a series of advertisements that ran on six consecutive Saturdays in the *News and Observer*. The ads featured church members in their everyday worlds and prompted a story in the newspaper that included some reference to "Madison Avenue."

On the lighter side, regular churchwide fellowships followed some Sunday night services, for which times women provided ice cream and men made the cakes, the bakers showing their competitive sides as the judges tasted their works of art.

Three young men were listed on the staff as youth directors in 1981: Jeff Wisdom resigned in July, to be followed in the interim by Bruce Dickerson, a seminary student. Mr. Dickerson, who was ordained by the church on September 6, was succeeded in December by Danny Redding.

A fourth young man was called as minister of music on October 28. He visited on October 11, however, according to the *Tabernacle Record:* "Christopher Jenkins will be leading our music ministry all day long," and, in addition to directing the choirs, "He will present a brief concert during the Sunday night service."

In then-recent months, Ellis Chapel had been tastefully renovated, and, on Sunday evening, October 18, it was rededicated. A churchwide social followed in Carroll Hall.

In the minutes of the early years, the church clerks often used the phrase, "in conference assembled," and in minutes of the latter years, some future historian may read, "around the tables gathered."

10

"O TREAD THE CITY STREETS AGAIN"
1982–1993

The Living Christmas Tree was first presented in 1982.

Chapter 9 introduced some innovative ministries of the early '80s, but the grandest of all—the beautiful presentation every December of the Living Christmas Tree—is surely the one most remembered. John Hatcher had seen a similar musical production at First Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, and asked Chris Jenkins, minister of music, to travel to Georgia in late 1981 and view that tree with a critical eye toward bringing a recommendation back to the church. Mr. Jenkins enthusiastically promoted the idea for Tabernacle, and, on February 28, 1982, at a special church conference, this new outreach ministry was adopted. Planning, construction, and decoration of the tree took almost the entire year; in fact, as early as August, 1982, twenty-one committees were already at work. The tree frame, designed by consulting engineer David C. Fishetti, was 26 feet wide and 30 feet tall and would support 95 singers. Its thirteen main trusses were so huge that one of the stained glass windows had to be removed in order to lift them into the sanctuary. Once the builders secured the frame, "weavers" wove white pine into a wire "fence" on each tier. Decorations included Chrismons, garlands, and, of course, lights. From floor level, a full orchestra accompanied the choirs, and from the balcony, a lighting crew so artistically synchronized lights with music that sound and sight blended dramatically. The *Tabernacle Record* for November 1 stated the case: "From this structure, . . . our [church] will present the Christmas message of salvation."

The audience at each performance—Thursday through Sunday nights and Sunday afternoon—was estimated at 500–750 people. In fact, after a year or two, the church had to charge $1.00 for ticket reservations simply to keep the size of the audience within bounds. Dr. Randall Lolly, president of nearby Southeastern Seminary, was one of those many visitors in 1982. On December 14, he wrote to Chris Jenkins, director of the program and a former seminarian:

> Last night's presentation of "The Living Christmas Tree" was profound, provocative, and out and out good fun. It demonstrated incredible commitment and hard work by you especially—as well as hundreds more.
>
> Tabernacle has given all of us a great gift! Thanks for it.

Throughout the seventeen years (1982–1998) of this "great gift" to the community, no two years were exactly the same, except for the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*, which ended every presentation. Among the lengthy list of narrators have been Dr. Forrest Feezor in 1983; Russell Capps; Dr. Albert Edwards and Jan Anderson; and Dr. Mark White and Dianne White.

Music and the music program were dominant in 1982. The Tintinnabulators, a handbell choir of 14 ringers of 70 bells, played for the Sunday morning service of April 25. The *Tabernacle Record* of September 1 told the rest of the story: "We are so pleased that the Tintinnabulators, a college handbell choir, have become a part of the music outreach of [the church]." Mrs. Frances Corbin directed the choir, which accepted invitations for guest appearances from far and wide. The Tintinnabulators considered Tabernacle their home base for about two years.

On September 1, 1982, Gladys Sutter announced her retirement after forty-four years as church organist. Mr. Hatcher declared all of September "Gladys Sutter Appreciation Month." In January, 1983, Mrs. Sutter was named organist emerita. Patti Lingerfelt became interim organist in October, 1982; Phyllis Crane wedding coordinator—a new and non-compensated position—in 1983; and Joseph Collins part-time

youth director, also in 1983, Danny Redding having resigned November 20. P.T. Rideout had resigned as church host on July 1, 1982. Donna White replaced him for a brief time before her tragic death in an automobile accident, at which time Mrs. White's mother, Mrs. Lee Burke, became church hostess.

While musical events and music-related situations appeared to take center stage in 1982, mission outreach was never out of mind or effort. For example, the *Tabernacle Record* of May 12, 1982, took note of Mr. Hatcher's first anniversary as pastor. In his own column, he wrote, "The one thing that most deeply gratifies us is that we are able to count 94 precious souls who joined Tabernacle in the last 52 weeks."

Danny Redding shepherded the youth to New York for a summer project at the pioneer church of J.C. Price, former minister of education.

And the outreach theme continued in 1983 and 1984, notably through the Continuing Witness Training program (CWT), a Home Mission Board curriculum, which had been adopted by the church. After a period of training, Mr. Poole implemented the program and, in turn, trained volunteers in their commitment to personal evangelism.

Regina White made her own commitment to missions in the summer of 1984, serving as a journeyman in Antigua, while other of the youth, under the supervision of Joe Collins, hopped the church bus to New York for a week of mission outreach there. At home, faithful members ministered in their individual ways: Earle and Mary Daeke, as well as Pauline Brown, who send cards for special occasions; Nancy McLean, who supports missionaries by frequent communication and who substitutes for caregivers by her presence; Laura Smith, who is also a compassionate friend to caregivers and their patients; Clyde Smith, who provides transportation for several in the church family; Bunny Brown, who is a visitor *extraordinaire*; Jo Wallace and Barbara and Charles Webb, who constantly care for a church member with no family; Mildred Adams, who is a Hospice volunteer; and John Freeman, who often takes overnight duty at the homeless shelter. . . .

Meanwhile, the church voted to support Macedonia Baptist Church at the rate of $50.00 a month for two years and to pay a month's rent ($450.00) for the new Urban Ministries Center.

Tabernacle felt less unselfish losing its minister of music to another church than sharing its financial resources. Mr. Jenkins' resignation took effect on February 16, and the church presented to him and his wife, Connie, the piano they used in their home during his tenure.

The pastorate of 2nd John ended with Mr. Hatcher's resignation to accept a call to Pembroke Baptist Church in Pembroke Pines, Florida.

The next interim pastor graced the calling for just over three months. On July 8, 1984, Frances Cook for the pulpit supply committee commended to the church Dr. John Carlton, professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, his ministry to begin the next day, July 9. Dr. Carlton was well-loved and deeply appreciated. The depth of his sermons, the warmth of his personality, and the surprise of his wit brought him close to the people. Dr. Carlton spoke highly of the "mind of the church" as well as of the theological understanding of individuals. He said he loved everyone at Tabernacle, "but it had been well worth coming just to get to know Robert Poole." On another occasion he remarked that "Robert will go straight to heaven—if he just doesn't overshoot it!" When Dr. Carlton died in 1989, the *Biblical Recorder* of April 8 carried a tribute titled, "John W. Carlton: 'fallen giant.'"

In the meantime, the church-owned rental houses at 224 and 226 East Morgan Street fell to Wadsworth Wrecking Company, and the empty spaces were paved for parking.

While empty lots might occasionally wait for paving, the pulpit at Tabernacle is never empty—certainly not in 1984. At a called conference on September 9, Milam Johnson, chair of the pastor search committee, moved that the church extend a call to Dr. John A. Allen, pastor of Edenton (North Carolina) Baptist Church. A unanimous vote resulted, and Dr. Allen began his pastorate the first Sunday in November. Dr. and Mrs. Allen, with their sons, Billy and John Thomas, seemed to adjust easily to the church and the church to them.

Dr. Allen is a graduate of Old Dominion University with a B.A. degree in sociology and of Southeastern Seminary, where he earned both the M.Div. And D.Min. degrees. Dr. Allen and his wife, Carolyn, were at the time studying with the Council on Christian Life and Public Af-

fairs with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina to become certified Marriage Enrichment Counselors.

The new pastor wrote to the church via the *Tabernacle Record* of November 13:

Dr. John A. Allen

> Words fail to convey how appreciative I am of the reception my family and I have received from the members of Tabernacle Baptist Church. Our first Sunday was a prime example. There was a spirit of friendliness and warmth in the worship services. The afternoon reception was so well attended, [and] with the rainy weather, many of you made an extra effort to attend. Throughout the day I did not feel like a new arrival, but rather that I had come home.

Dr. Allen had asked Robert Poole to postpone retirement until the end of 1984, and on January 11, 1985, the church gave Mr. Poole a splendid sendoff under the theme of "Upon Every Remembrance," from Philippians 1:3. Carroll Hall was filled with members and visitors who had come to dine, to remember, and to pay tribute.

In May, 1985, the church called Ryland Michael Harris as minister of education and associate pastor and, in August, named Clifton D. Harris as minister of music and youth.

Also in August—the 25th—Tabernacle ordained Robert L. Cooke into the ministry. Mr. Cooke, a seminary student, and his wife, Denise, had entered almost every time the church doors swung open. But they did far more than simply attend; they also worked wherever they were needed, and both sang in the choir. As far as the records show, Mr. Cooke was the first to be ordained into the ministry since Bruce Dickerson in 1981; however, a number had received ordination since some were listed in Chapter 5. Ordained since 1940 were Everette G. Murray, 1942; Luther Walker, 1944; E.W. (Buddy) Price, Jr., 1945; J.C. Bunn and Jacob Bernheim, 1946; Homer I. Nichols, 1947; Clyde Yates, 1948; William C. Medlin, 1951; David Wooten, 1957; and Marshall Crane, 1967. Mr. Bernheim, one of the two ordained in 1946, was Jewish. An entry from the records of March 17, 1946, reads, "Jacob

Bernheim is doing an excellent work for Christ among the Jews. He is field secretary for the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America."

D-O-W-N-T-O-W-N. The word took on new meaning for Tabernacle in the mid- to late-'80s. At the conference of October 30, 1985, the finance committee and deacons jointly recommended an ad hoc strategic planning committee for upgrading the church's image during the city's downtown redevelopment. The committee would stay abreast of progress and would recommend complementary improvements, such as new church signs, the use of the carillon, backlighting stained glass windows at night, and other attention-getters aimed at the neighbors in the new condominiums a block away and from passers-by. Henry wall said, "There's plenty going on. If you want to paint, see Charles Parrish; if you want to help with the grounds, see Hoyle Clay" (7-8-1988).

In October, 1988, Dr. Allen recommended a four-year reduction in Cooperative Program contributions—from 11 percent to 5 percent—to begin January 1, 1989. He said the church needed to "reach out in Raleigh with advertising, promotions, music, and radio ministry. And, if we are successful we will grow enough to more than replace the difference." After a month's postponement, the church approved the recommendation to use the 6 percent available under the plan for "Tabernacle ministries" as cited above.

At the same time, more and more street people were loitering on the steps and in the entryways and using church property for highly objectionable purposes. Once, the story goes, a vagrant broke into the church and was glad to be caught when, panic-stricken, he had wandered in all directions and could find no way out.

Soon after Dr. Allen's arrival, he had recommended the establishment of a new long-range planning committee, and the church authorized training for him and four others. In May, 1986, the committee reported that Raleigh's population had increased by 32 percent in ten years; that 38,000 people worked downtown; that Raleigh's median age was 27 and Tabernacle's was 57; that half the residents of Raleigh were single; and that 17 percent, or 31,280 people, attended church on Sundays. The committee also offered statistics for

Tabernacle: The church property was then appraised at $2,250,000, and 31 percent of our members gave 100 percent of the monetary support.

Becoming more cognizant of its inner-city characterization, Tabernacle voted in 1986 to join the other downtown churches in hosting an Easter sunrise service at the Capitol. Breakfast would be served at the church—now a tradition, courtesy of Les Wallace and the willing chefs of Median Adult II. On Easter in 1987, the church would worship at sunrise with Martin Street Baptist Church, a predominantly Black congregation also located downtown.

The Space and Information Ages merged about that time. It was difficult to know where the most excitement lay—in space or in cyberspace. In the spring of 1986, the computer committee and the staff had loaded the church's new technological wonder with the church roll, and the computer was guaranteed to make life easier in every way, including the keeping of financial records.

As far as financial records were concerned, Americans had entered 1986 with dread of the exploding federal deficit, but 28 days into January, it grieved as the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded on takeoff, killing its six-member crew and a passenger. Among the dead were astronaut Michael J. Smith from North Carolina and public school teacher Christa McCauliffe from New Hampshire.

Tabernacle members tended to mourn or rejoice with the rest of the nation, but the church family, as all families, had its own moments of accomplishment and periods of disappointment that would reach neither television watchers nor newspaper readers. But a decision in 1986 attracted a widespread radio audience. The voters in conference on October 29 committed to a weekly 30-minute WPTF radio broadcast on Sunday mornings at 8:30, each taped program to air the previous Sunday's morning worship service, at a cost of $300.00. In the *Tabernacle Record* of October 31, 1999, Mark White, the 23rd pastor, wrote, "Since 1937, Tabernacle's radio ministry has been one of its most 'high profile' ministries. When I came here as pastor one of my greatest surprises was that this is a voluntarily funded ministry—that is, no budget support and no appeals are made on the program. It is carried on

by voluntary donations, mostly by church members." Dr. White ended his column with the gratifying news that Tabernacle's Sunday morning program is currently rated as the No. 1 A.M. program in the Triangle market in the 8:30 time slot, reaching an audience of about 10,000 listeners each Sunday.

Another decision in 1987 would have an immeasurable impact on both the church and the community. A recommendation from the long-range planning commitee called for lunch and a devotional message to be provided each Wednesday for people who work downtown. Ultimately, the first lunch would begin at 11:25 a.m. and the second at 12:30 p.m., with a devotional period between the two. Believing that the program would attract particularly the people who worked in the Federal Building across Person Street from the church, the visionaries were not disappointed; however, they were surprised at the numbers who came from all over downtown, as well as some retired members of the church family. The Wednesday noon program was inaugurated the first week in April, 1987, and it would continue as long as Tabernacle remained at its Person and Hargett Streets location. The Wednesday "lunch bunch" usually numbered about 120 or more. Mrs. Burke, the former church hostess, said that the intent was to feed the soul as well as the body.

Other votes in 1986, 1987, and 1988 included opposition to the Home Mission Board's decision to withdraw salary support from churches who have women pastors (10-29-1986); establishment of the Tabernacle Education Fund, combining all educational endowments" (5-27-1987); a move to name the church library in honor of Cletus Speagle, the first librarian, who had served in that position since 1955 (1-28-1987); opposition to parimutuel betting (5-25-1988); and use of the new van to transport members to and from church (9-23-1987).

While Tabernacle had no vote in the matter, it rejoiced with the rest of the world—that also had no vote—in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Much debate and little voting accompanied an ongoing discussion of day care for either infants and toddlers or for the elderly. In 1988, five downtown businesses indicated interest in child care at Tabernacle

to the point of offering to help defray the expense of necessary changes in the educational building. On January 25, 1989, before the debate was over, the church learned that the *News and Observer* (one of the businesses) had withdrawn from the effort, and, by March 1, the only remaining participants were the city, the county, and the church. But on May 31, the city and county also withdrew, leaving the door open, however, "if we [the church] made up our mind." All the way into 1990, the day care committee continued to function; however, on May 30, 1990, Milam Johnson, chair, reported that a recent survey showed the church was "not willing to give the needed support. . . ." And the committee was dissolved that very night, evidently to the chagrin of Dr. Allen, who said, "We seem to find reasons for *not* doing something rather than looking for ways that the church *can* do something."

Unrest regarding our vast array of empty rooms on week days soon was overshadowed by the *little* rest for the personnel committee in the late '80s and early '90s as the committee and the church bade farewell to some and welcomed other staff members: Mike Harris resigned as associate pastor and minister of education on June 26, 1988, and the church called Brad Ferguson as associate pastor on March 1, 1989. Also, organist Ed Kearney resigned in June, 1989, and was succeeded by Dwayne Holloway. Tom Reed became the new food service director in August, 1990, and the committee reported on locating a prospective custodian, Tom McCullers. Mr. McCullers was on the staff for four years before he died unexpectedly. Mr. John Cunningham would succeed him in 1996. Clif Harris, who was ordained by the church on November 25, 1990, would leave June 16, 1991, to become minister of music at Winter Park Church in Wilmington. And, at Sue Starnes' resignation, Lucille Perry accepted the position of church secretary as of May 20, 1991. The church named Lori Settle as minister of youth on March 25, 1992, to be succeeded by Peggy Holland as minister of children/youth on October 27, 1993. Mrs. Holland had served as interim minister of music in 1992, between the ministries of Clif Harris and Jesse Waugh. Mr. Waugh—an ordained minister and a graduate of Southern Seminary with a master's in church music—was called as minister of music and education on October 28, 1992. Mr. and Mrs.

Waugh and their daughters, Megan and Sommer, quickly became part of the church family. The church had already honored Brad and Dianne Ferguson as they left Tabernacle—he as associate pastor—on July 26, 1992. Organist Dwayne Holloway had resigned in September, 1992, and Jim Elmore, his successor, had started on April 21, 1993. But when Jerry B. Cooper resigned as church clerk, effective September 30, 1990, the personnel committee was not responsible for his replacement; however, it took note, as did the whole church family, that Mr. Cooper had served for 30 years in that office. In 1992, Catherine Freeman was elected church clerk, following a year's interim service by associate clerk William H. Early.

Meanwhile, the church decided to participate in PACTS (Project Assistance for Churches in Transition), a program of the Home Mission Board, from whose staff George Bullard, a former Tabernacle member, would research and advise. Out of those consultations came decisions to advertise; to improve the church's appearance by installing underground electrical cables; to offer community concerts; and to continue negotiating with the city in its intention to build parking decks—perhaps four decks high—on church property. According to Tabernacle representative Holman Cyrus, the plan would leave the church with weekday parking so sparse as to be totally unacceptable. In 1991, Tabernacle offered to lease parking lots to the city with the understanding that the church would use them on Sundays. The negotiations had become so testy in 1990 that a remark in the conference of April 25 stated that "several people have spoken about telling the city council we will sell them the whole block and move out. This is something we may want to consider."

But first, Tabernacle *re*considered day care, appointing a re-study committee chaired by John Freeman. The city had agreed to return to the negotiating table, but the county was not yet ready. In June—six months later—discussion was still plentiful but not hopeful.

Dr. Allen resigned November 24 to accept the call to First Baptist Church, Clayton, North Carolina, and the deacons held a special session to elect a pastor search committee, with Clyde Smith serving as chair.

The pulpit supply committee requested a called conference on January 19, 1992, unanimously to recommend as interim pastor Mark T. White, D.Min., associate director of North Carolina Baptist Men. Dr. White began his association with Tabernacle on February 2. He was present at the church conference on March 25 to witness the church's vote to write a letter to Dr. Charles L. McMillan, director of missions of the Raleigh Baptist Association, in support of "the Raleigh Baptist Association Executive Committee's Resolution on Homosexuality and the Church, adopted March 4, 1992, and printed on page eight of the *Biblical Recorder* of March 14, 1992." In the same conference, the church voted to send another letter—this one to the city—summarizing Tabernacle's position on the Blount Street Master Plan proposed as part of the city's revitalization. The list included the church's opposition to reduction of parking places below 110 and to a museum of more than two stories on the property next door. The letter also alluded to the impact of parking deck plans "that may either restrict membership growth or playground space and reduce air quality."

Dr. Mark T. White

And God sent Mark White "for such a time as this." In a special session on Sunday morning, May 17, 1992, Clyde Smith, chair of the pastor search committee reported,

> Because of his position as interim pastor and his employment with the Baptist State Convention, Mark White was not considered a prospect [as pastor] at first; however, as the group worked to narrow its list and begin contacting prospects, members learned that Dr. White was considering a return to the pastoral ministry. At that point, the committee felt free to consider him.

Mr. Smith said he believed that the pastor search committee had brought "God's man for Tabernacle at this crucial time in its history."

The vote was unanimously in favor of calling Dr. White as twenty-

third pastor. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and of Southeastern Seminary, where he received the M.Div. in 1981 and the D.Min. in 1985. He has been the pastor of three churches. Both Mark and Dianne White's fathers are Baptist ministers, Dianne's parents living in Texas and Mark's in nearby Clayton, North Carolina. The Whites are authors of *The Goat Lady and Other Worship Stories for Children* (1990) and *The Windowsill of Heaven: Collected Sermons of Theodore F. Adams* (1992). Mrs. White is a teacher and a popular speaker, reaching the entire congregation with her children's sermons.

In 1992, a search committee of a different ilk found niches in which to relocate the library and the Bruner classroom, new restrooms to occupy the old classroom space, and the library to move to a central location adjacent to the parlor. The naming of the Cletus Speagle Library in honor of Tabernacle's first and then current librarian, entailed an official churchwide ceremony for a dedicated and loyal woman who received little recognition in life. But the conference sheet of January 27, 1993, carried the sad news of Miss Speagle's death. She had died in a fire that destroyed her home.

The church started the year 1993 with a smaller deacon body, its having been downsized (a '90s word) from 39 to 30 members. Also early in the year—on January 26—the church established a new long-range planning committee, chaired by Dr. White, that created Tabernacle's new mission statement as follows:

> The purpose of Tabernacle Baptist Church is to develop a relationship with God through Christ, and use that relationship to witness to all people with whom we have contact. Under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit we will endeavor to
>
> - Minister to our community and the whole world
> - Teach the truths of God
> - Have fellowship with other Christians

If the church were to serve its community, as point No. 1 suggested, it would look for ways to meet needs, and it did. One solution was to

provide a safe shelter for homeless women at the church on Sunday afternoons. .

Baptists have traditionally "held a strong belief in the 'Priesthood of the Believer' and the autonomy of the local church, but these beliefs are now being eroded in favor of a more credalistic view which demands uniformity of belief." The quotation is from a July 12, 1993, report of the TBC World Program Study Committee of and for the Finance Committee. Then and earlier, Tabernacle was one of many churches looking for ways "to continue funding Cooperative Missions and traditional Baptist causes without supporting the current national leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention. Providing this avenue is a primary goal of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF). . . ." The report further stated,

Beginning in January, 1994, contributors to Tabernacle will be asked to check Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program Plan; Southern Baptist Convention / North Carolina Optional Cooperative Program Plan; Cooperative Baptist Fellowship on each offering envelope. Where no choice is indicated, the national funds portion of undesignated contributions will be channeled through the "Southern Baptist Convention / North Carolina Optional Cooperative Plan" which was chosen by Tabernacle in January of 1991.

On October 31, 1993, the church assembled in special conference to hear the report of the long-range planning committee:

Pastor White . . . presented the goals and action plans. . . . The goal . . . "To make a feasibility study regarding moving the church to another location," elicited the greatest . . . discussion. Members of the committee pointed out that the recommendation came from the congregation; that it was a proposal to study rather than a proposal to relocate; and that the issued needed to be put to rest. . . since the final decision would determine what kind of church Tabernacle would be.

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O Master, from the mountainside, / Make haste to heal these hearts of pain.
Among these restless throngs abide. / O tread the city streets again!

--From "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" by F.M. North
~~~

The Living Christmas Tree, with narrators Mark and Dianne White, left, director Jesse R. Waugh, and organist Marshall Tyson.

11

WINDOWS ON THE 21ST CENTURY
1994–2000

The new Millennium was six years away. Tabernacle had no idea what the future would hold for it but set its sights on a spiritual journey and headed that way. The church had adopted the long-range planning committee's report, one priority of which was an option to relocate. And, of course, the overall priority in everything was to seek—and to know—God's will in the matter. A historian's fondest wish might be to understand and then report exactly how God worked through individuals, both in and outside the church and how He was active in the minutest details of good decision making. She only knows in general: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray . . . ." (II Chronicles 7:14, KJV).

Lay Renewal was on the planners' minds in early 1994, and teams of women and men came from around the state to participate in the program tailored for Tabernacle. Out of that weekend grew several ongoing small groups that met for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. They were forerunners of later but similar meetings for purposes of revisioning.

All the while, the inner city crept closer. In 1994, the church installed iron gates at the front entrances to the sanctuary to preserve property and cleanliness, a move which had to be approved by the Raleigh Historic Commission, since the church had been declared a Historic Site in the '80s. But its historied past had less to do with the collapsed ceiling over the choir loft in 1995 than did collections of rainwater through leaks in the roof. A commentary on a declining and

aging membership was the inability financially to keep the massive church buildings in tip-top repair.

If the aging membership tended to slow down a bit, the youth geared up for their 1995 mission trip to Baltimore, Maryland, raising funds by selling cookbooks of Tabernacle members' recipes. Ray Kelly's recipe for buttermilk biscuits caused a stir:

1 can buttermilk biscuits

Heat oven to 400°. Pull easy open tab. Place biscuits ¼-inch apart in two rows on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and serve hot. Makes 10 biscuits.

For financing later mission trips, they intermittently served—for a donation—early Sunday morning continental breakfasts before Sunday school.

Recipes for thought were handed down fom the relocation feasibility committee in a report at the April 26 conference, at which each member of the committee spoke to a different issue. A month later, at the May 31, 1995, conference, the deacons recommended

> that the church approve a "Site Committee" immediately. This committee, after being recommended by the Long Range Planning Committee and approved by the church, will have as its purpose identifying a tentative new site for Tabernacle. This committee will enable the church to be ready in the event the church family does in fact make a decision to relocate at some point in the future. Any such decision would be contingent on there being a "buyer" for the present property.

The church cast ballots on Sunday, June 4, at which time 146 voted for the move, and 25 opposed it. Six members were elected to the site committee in the June 28 conference: Bitsy Hobbs; Jerry Cooper; Phil Stone (later elected chair); Larry Sorrels; Nellie Keglers; and John Freeman.

Organist Jim Elmore had resigned in June, 1994, and Mrs. Doris Johnston served in the interim. The church named Marshall Tyson organist in the July, 1995, conference. Mr. Tyson was called a month

after John Vestal was named pastoral intern. Mr. Vestal, whom the church also licensed to preach, was a Duke Divinity School student and a computer programmer. At the January 31, 1996, conference, Mrs. Willie Thorpe, former cook/maid, was named church hostess, and her daughter, Teresa, soon came as Mrs. Thorpe's helper. Financial secretary Betsy Cornblatt had announced her retirement for March 31, and the church made plans to honor her at a reception with a plaque in appreciation of her sixteen years of service. When Mrs. Cornblatt left, Mrs. Lucille Perry accepted added financial duties to her own job description, and the church named her administrative church secretary, as of April 1. In Mrs. Perry's six years at Tabernacle, computerized records had relinquished enough staff time for her to do both jobs with the help of a part-time assistant. At the conference of March 27, 1996, the church converted the ad hoc computer committee to a standing one, which action in itself was a commentary on the times. And on January 27, 1999, the church called Mr. Steve Matheny as organist, which was a commentary on Tabernacle's good fortune.

Also, the first ever ministry options committee became a reality, and, after deliberation, focused on three possibilities:

- Remain in the present location and continue to serve our Lord and our membership as we are presently doing as long as possible.
- Remain in our present location, re-design and align our ministries and programs to better serve the Lord in recognition of the socio-economic, ethnic, geographic and other changes that have already begun to impact us.
- Relocate to another area where Tabernacle can continue to serve the Lord according to our established history and traditions of ministry and purpose. (5-29-1996)

Option No. 2 might have crossed their minds on September 25, 1996, when the committee voted, with the rest of the church, to enter a covenant relationship with the city's Haitian Baptist Church. Tabernacle hastily renovated the area directly above the church offices for assembly and classrooms for the twenty-one Haitians who would be relocating there. The Rev. Judson Pierre, the Haitian pastor, became a member of the church council, and, on a regular basis, the two congregations came

together for fellowship. Most of the adult Haitian Christians were professionals in the Research Triangle Park.

Tabernacle's family also came together in fellowship and support of Dr. Ken Coley, who had been named professor of Christian education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and whose ordination service was set for July 14, 1996. Dr. Coley and his twin brother, Dave, also an educator, are sons of Sarah and Albert Coley who, for many years, were active in the church. In the Coleys' preteen and teen years, several other sets of twins were their contemporaries—or nearly so. Brenda and Sandra Clay, daughters of Margaret and Hoyle Clay; Lou and Sue Bradley, daughters of Mildred and Lonnie Bradley; Gary and John Cyrus, sons of Billie Marie and Holman Cyrus; Susan and Margaret Yates, daughters of Lucy and Bobby Yates; Lauren and Jo Ellen Rose, daughters of Joyce and Tommy Rose; Sherrie and Perry Pritchard, daughter and son of Dot and Waymon Pritchard; Ronald and Donald Ragan, sons of Carolyn and Thomas Ragan; and Susan and Steve Shoemaker, daughter and son of Rennie and Hal Shoemaker. Some twins would be younger: Bret and Bart Jones, sons of Peggy Jones; and some older: Suzanne Britt and Don Britt (non-member), Mary and Martha Peebles; Ruth and Ruby Wicker; and James and John Hutchins.

Some speak of "the twins phenomena"; Donna Eason speaks of memories—of Mrs. Lizzie Newton taking notes on Sunday morning on a small pad with a *short* pencil; of Dr. Heaton's *big* hands; of A.C. Snow's newspaper column on Dr. Heaton's sermon, "Ye Are the Salt of the Earth," and his calling on Mr. Charlie *Morton* to lead in prayer. Carol Hollifield Beasley also remembers—"crossing the street from Hugh Morson School 7-8 grades going to study hall then dinner and choir. Oh, the food! The sanctuary to me then looked huge. . . .The strong values will stay with me forever. I try to pass these values in my children and grandchildren. I was baptized here. I have attended many churches on various occasions but this is *home*!" James Hutchins remembers the influential lives of Mr. and Mrs. Batson and of Miss Foy Newton. Henry Wall, Linwood Brown, and Wes Adams (former member) remember what choir members dozed off—and for how long— behind the organ

when the instrument was positioned in the center of the choir loft and hid some of the basses, baritones, and tenors from the congregation.

Tabernacle took the twin factor in stride, and, some years later, would be exclaiming over the "Chinatown phenomenon." Under leadership of W.M.U. director Phyllis Crane, a group of adults took leave from their "day jobs" and turned into bona fide missionaries for a week every summer. In 1997 and for four consecutive years after that, they identified Chinatown, New York, the Trust in God Chinese Baptist Church, and the Graffiti Mission on the lower east side as their destinations. In the summer of 2,000, the missionaries' friend Dr. Bayer Lee, pastor of Truth of God Baptist Church in Chinatown, visited Tabernacle and spoke to a Wednesday night crowd around the tables in Carroll Hall. Dr. Lee's wife and young son were with him, the family's having brought an older son to enroll at Duke.

Some decisions of 1999 were overshadowed by the focus on relocation; however, several earned a place in the history books: The Summer Special Olympics—with all the Olympians, volunteers, and spectators—heaped national attention upon Raleigh from June 28–July 3, and Mr. Waugh rounded up Tabernacle volunteers to help coordinate activities, particularly from his station on Rock Quarry Road.

Mr. John Vestal returned to Tabernacle as an intern from Duke Divinity School expressly to develop a web site for the church, the address of which is "www.tabernacle-baptist.org."

W.M.U. director Phyllis Crane and other Tabernacle volunteers fed 500 hot dogs to the homeless on a Sunday in June, 1999. That type of voluntary service had been and would be ongoing—at least while the church was located downtown.

For two consecutive days in December, a Christmas concert replaced the traditional Living Christmas Tree.

Citywide devastation lay in the wake of Hurricane Fran on September 6, 1997, but the church house was not severely damaged; only the roof needed extensive repairs. And Hurricane Floyd in 1999, did little harm to Raleigh but flooded to destruction some towns in the

eastern parts of North Carolina. Tabernacle individuals and groups, youth and senior citizens alike, helped restore some semblance of order in each instance, and the church would still be recruiting volunteers for rebuilding in Chowan County in late September, 2000. Raleigh's 20-inch snowfall in January, 2000, would cause cancellation of church services and activities for two weeks.

Emerging from bad weather—both literally and metaphorically—with renewed vigor for and intense interest in the future, God's people whom He calls Tabernacle would create an agenda for the journey. On March 26, 1997, the church voted to establish a relocation and building fund from several then-recent bequests totaling about $28,000.

A new and different equation entered the probability when the church voted to lease some of the educational building to the Explor*is* organizaion—the parent of the children's museum to be constructed next door—for an Explor*is* Middle School.

The vote to lease occurred in June. In July, Phil Stone, for the site committee, identified 30-plus acres on Leesville Road as the property the committee deemed best suited for Tabernacle's new location. Other potential sites were on Capitol Boulevard at Durant Road; U.S. Highway 64 at Rolesville Road; I-40 at White Oak Road; and Ten Ten Road at Bell's Lake Road. Mr. Stone said that the owner is "holding the [Leesville Road] property for our refusal" (7-30-1997). The news inspired action, and, in the same conference, the church established a strategic planning committe, whose mission was "to coordinate the sale and/or lease of the current church facility, purchase of land, construction of a new church facility, and the planning for church growth and programming." The membership would comprise the pastor; trustees; site committee chair; finance committee chair; buildings and grounds committee chair; and deacon chair. Each member, in turn, would chair a subcommittee on promotion; church growth; church programs; property; finance; furnishings; building/grounds design; and consruction. A wise admonition (author unknown) emerged: "[T]hese aspects of relocation are interdependent and . . . each . . . should be carried out as a part of a shared vision. . . ." As of January 1, 1998, the Sunday eve-

ning schedule was "converted to an open time to allow for committee meetings and/or special services" (11-19-1997).

Especially good news came on October 1, 1997, with Phil Stone's announcement that Gordon Smith, III, of Explor*is* was interested in purchasing the entire church complex. The sale to Mr. Smith closed on April 29, 1998, a check for $3,018,175.25 to be delivered the next day, April 30. After tax stamps for the sale and less title insurance, the total amount deposited in Tabernacle's account was $3,008,970. The lease agreement with Explor*is* called for monthly rent of $7,000.00, and the subcommittee on finances suggested a budget line item called "Woodpile LLC," into which the church would transfer utilities, insurance, housekeeping, food service maintenance, and any other budgeted items that the church, as tenant, would not have to pay until its relocation.

Minutes of the April 29, 1998, conference began, "Like aliens in a foreign land, we now conduct our church conferences as tenants and not the landlord of these premises we have so long called Tabernacle Baptist Church." But many in the church family expressly believed that God's guiding hand had made it possible to remain "at home" until the new church is ready. And Phil Stone's written report, which was distributed at that conference, was reassuring: "Closing on the sale of our present property on April 29th opened the door for moving ahead [and signing] a contract on the Leesville Road site." The new property comprises 31.6 acres of rolling land on a beautiful knoll, for which the seller accepted Tabernacle's offer of $50,000 per acre, and the church readily approved Mr. Stone's motion that the planning and building steering committee "proceed with due diligence . . . ." Architects +, a division of Envirotek, would design the buildings, and Clancy and Theys would build them. In consultation, these two companies in partnership with the church determined that the first phase of construction would be anchored by a chapel to seat 300, the main sanctuary to come later.

Myriad delays in obtaining building permits; in seeing to the reworking of electrical wires and cables; in meetings of minds in encroachment and highway right-of-way situations that might become

problematic gave the "back 40" team of volunteers plenty of time to construct a hiking trail on the property and enticed various groups to go there to celebrate happy occasions.

The happiest event of all was the Leesville Road site groundbreaking festival—replete with hard hats, gold shovels, and white balloons—that followed the Homecoming 1999 morning service and barbecue dinner in the church house downtown. Among the groundbreakers, hard hat and all, was Louise Crane, said to be the oldest member of the church. Several former members and other visitors had attended the morning service, and some the groundbreaking. But notable among newer members there were close neighbors of the Leesville Road property, Judy and Bill Casteen, who had joined Tabernacle in early 1999 in order to be active in planning and executing the move. Their daughter, Joelle, who is a college student, joined the church in April, 1999, and was a short-term mission volunteer to India in the summer of 2000. Already performing great service to the church by having held Vacation Bible School at their home for two years and as teachers/departmental directors and committee workers, Mr. and Mrs. Casteen also have kept the grounds around the Leesville site sign litter free and attractive with plants, and, each Sunday in the interim, they have cheerfully reported the week's site happenings.

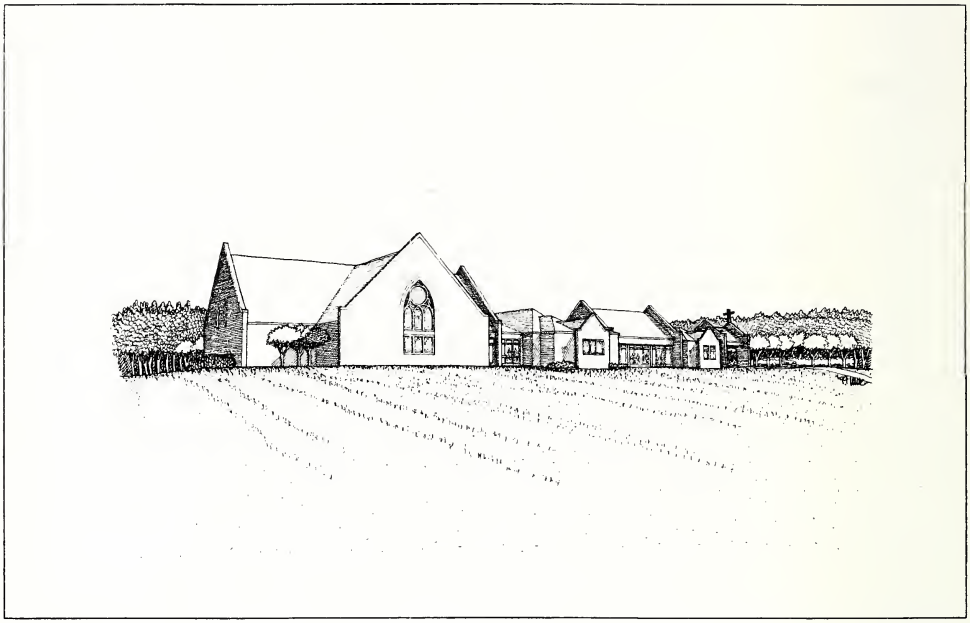
The publicity subcommittee of strategic planning sponsored a contest for designing a sign, which would invite passersby on Leesville Road to "celebrate the rebirth of Tabernacle, a historic church for the 21st Century." Clyde Smith, with the help of his artistic son John Smith, won the competition hands down.

Tabernacle's "Challenge to Build" (CTB) program for raising capital funds taught much about "not equal giving, but equal sacrifice." A committee of thirteen, chaired by Ruth Baker, laid out a schedule of education, celebration, visitation, and, finally, victory on July 4, 1999, the membership having committed more than $500,000 to the challenge. In July, 2000, the report showed a total of $590.097.79 in pledges, and recent bequests and memorials have added to the building fund more than $173,000.

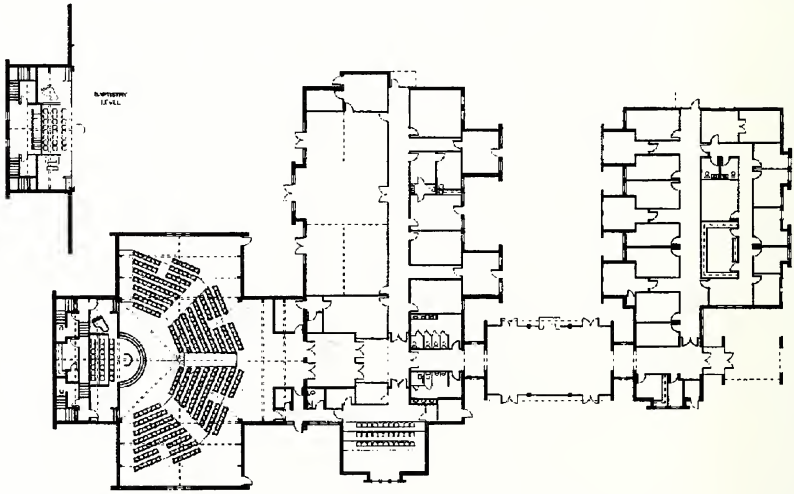
To itself the church pledged continuing care of thirty-three stained glass windows, twenty-one to be installed gingerly in the new building and the remaining twelve to be stored until later phases of construction. According to Mr. Bill Early, viewers considering the Ascension window actually see seven separate windows in one; and the same phenomenon is true for the Garden of Gethsemane window, which comprises seven windows above the balcony plus three below. Mr. Early has negotiated extensively with Mr. Robert Wysocki of Stained Glass Associates, who will see to the removal of the stained glass treasures at the downtown location and to the reinstallation on Leesville Road. To the new owners of the property at 118 South Person Street, which will become the Longview Center, Tabernacle is obligated to provide replacement windows—also in stained glass.

At a retreat at Meredith College on January 17 and 18, 1997, Dr. Charles McMillan, associational missionary for the Raleigh Baptist Association, delivered a devotional message to the site committee, the ministry programs options committee, and the trustees, using as his text II Samuel 5:24:

As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the Lord has gone out in front of you. . . .



Outside Elevation - 1st Phase



Floor Plan - 1st Phase (draft)

Architect's rendering, "A Historic Church for the 21st Century."

EPILOGUE

The Israelites of Old Testament days trekked through deserts and across seas for forty years to reach Canaan, their promised land. As they moved from one campsite to another, they took with them their "tent of meeting" or their portable tabernacle. In 2001, when Tabernacle Baptist Church leaves its 109-year "campsite" at the corner of Person and Hargett Streets in downtown Raleigh to "cross over" into its "promised land" on Leesville Road, the stained-glass windows will have been moved there, too, to continue their unique mission of illustrating Christ's lighting the way for "those who have eyes to see."

The Church believes that God's all-seeing eye has envisioned His people called Tabernacle worshiping in and ministering from a new location.

Sometime around 960 B.C., King Solomon built a magnificent temple on Mt. Zion and, at its dedication, Solomon prayed,

> Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Regard your servant's prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, "My name shall be there," that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. (I Kings 8:27–20, NRSV)

In the near future, Tabernacle will dedicate a new church house. Solomon's prayer "that [God's] eyes may be open night and day toward this house. . . ." might come to mind.